The Fair Sex of India.

A Reply to "Mother India"

BY

MRS. CHARULATA DEVI.

Ramkrishna Cottage,

23, Fordyce Lane.

CALCUTTA.

Published & Copy righted by
AMIYA SINHA,
Ramkrishna Cottage,
23, *Fordyce Lane.*
AND
Printed by H. Banerjee, at the
C. P. WORKS,
29, Ramkanta Mistry Lane.

To

My Countrymen

AND

Well-wishers of India.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

On account of the ensuing session of Indian National Congress to be held in Calcutta by the last week of December 1928, we have to hurry the book through the press, as a result of which certain printing mistakes have occurred in spite of our best endeavours to give it a good finish. We, therefore, earnestly request the Press and the reading public to be a little liberal in their views as regards the present edition.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

It is an open secret now that Miss Mayo's 'Mother India' was written for political and missionary propaganda, though she at times pretends to shed crocodile tears for the masses and women of India. It is admitted on all hands except only the wilfully blind that the "drain-inspector" covered her book throughout with half-truths and deliberate falsehoods. Further, as ill luck would have it, its propagation has been immense, and the protests made so far are not many in number. So, an attempt, however feeble, to present the real and glorious side of India, at least regarding its women may not after all turn out to be a superfluous cry in the wilderness.

Among Europeans and Americans there have been several friends, including ladies, who have seen and depicted the true picture of India, and have tried for its uplift. Many there have been who dissatisfied with the 'silver-gilt savage' civilisation of the West, have adopted the religion and country of

Hindusthan as their own. The cases of Madame Blavatsky, Dr. Annie Besant, Sister Nivedita, Miss Slade, Mr. Andrews, Mr. Pearson and Mostoram Babaji of Simla are but a few out of a legion. The Orientalists like Max Muller, Goldstucker, Sylvan Levi, Stein and Schopenhauer are also instances in point. But, owing to the allurements of the hellish domain and the dependence of India, only the dark points regarding it that have been depicted by mischievous busybodies have been always exploited by the interested for their own selfish propaganda. And, out of such portraitures, none is so mean and false, and none has attained such a notoriety within such a short time as that contained in Miss Mayo 's book. Hence arises the necessity of contribution, however small, towards the establishment of Indian prestige which, by the by, is inwardly admitted by such mischief-mongers as shown by their very efforts to minimise it.

In days of yore when modern America was nowhere, and when the forefathers of

the modern Europeans were perhaps roaming naked in the forests, India rose to its zenith, in material as well as spiritual attainments, and enjoyed its pristine glory for ages which no young modern nation, in its ephemeral and vainglorious span of life, may pretend to think of. It is an idle platitude, as it is common school-book knowledge, to say that the West was permeated with the Greek and Roman civilisations, and the latter took their births through Indian 'kul-tur'. Even now, the productions of India can in many respects compete with the best of any place in the civilised world. As to defects, no country has attained an Utopian ideal of being, and India, to its glory, stands only second best in the apparent inequities of existence, though banned by dependence. It is mostly useless to pay one back in one's own coin, especially when one is fool-hardy, but still we cannot shut our eyes to the grosser shortcomings of another society, at least for our enlightenment, the more so when one of such a society poses to be a monitor and passes unjust

strictures over a civilisation more advanced in the points referred to. Therefore, when we read o Suicide Club' and 'Ku-Klux-Klan' of America, or of Bolshevism, Fascism, Communism, Militant Suffragism and World War, or of the ominous problems of Labour, Colour and Class Subject Races, City Slums, Married Life, Prostitution and Venereal Diseases torturing the western world like nightmares, verily we appeal to the Dispenser to save us from such a civilisation, and then ask our monitor, 'Physician, heal thyself'. 'Religion is taboo' really to those who spurn at the Biblical advice of 'removing a beam in ones' eye instead of a mote in another's'. Missionaries and propagandists have better work at home than in India, and they might join hands with Carlyle, Tolstoy, Bernard Shaw, Russell and Ibsen. Not that we are perfect —nobody ever was or is, but we are tired of pseudo-friends clad in enemies' garbs, and simply pray, "Father, save us from such friends!"

Miss Mayo has laid special stress on the following points among others, viz., Early

Marriage, Widowhood, Female Seclusion and Education, Married Life, Prostitution and Kindred diseases. Maternity and Child-Health, etc. The refutations of her untrue statements have already appeared in the press. We shall here confine ourselves only to remarks and instances whereby the attacks on our 'Fair Sex' may, to some extent, be atoned for, because the Hindu woman, inspite of her faults, is a treasure that is valued everywhere because of its rarity. After some brief remarks on the above-mentioned topics, we shall cite some examples from our society which, if read aright, will give emulation to the females of any society, and from which, the country-women of Miss Mayo may find materials, after deep pondering, for the amelioration of their social frame so that similar types may be produced there also.

First, as to Married Life. Will Miss Mayo vouchsafe that her society enjoys more peace and happiness in married lives than the one she has attacked? Facts and figures show otherwise. Many westerners have

sighed with envious glances over the real monogamous life and its amenities that exist in India, and the earning maids and bachelors, including, of course, the authoress in question, amply testify by their lives to the cankering sore of western society. Then again, many western ladies are being married to Indians among other non-westerners. The questions of possible polygamy, birth-control, divorce, bachelor-taxation, foundlings, abortions, trial or companionate or Gretna Green marriages, etc., are tottering the very foundations of western society. Regarding prostitution, and kindred diseases, the less said the better. In the West, Birth-rate Commissions, Venereal Diseases Commission, Social Evil Committee of Fifteen, Mormonism, Ball Dances, Baths, Revue and Tableux Vivant, Objectionable cinemas and plays, Court-cases, Illegitimacy Acts, Hyde Park obscenities, Doukhoborism and the like, Abolition of Brothels at places, Blackmailing or Open solicitations or Display, Literature and art Profurient natnre, etc., too nauseating in details, amply show :

which society is superior in these respects. In our society, in spite of early marriages, there have arisen men like Asoka, Buddha, Dayananda, Chaitanya, Ramkrishna, Vivekananda, Gandhiji, Rabindranath, Rammohan, Vidyasagar, Tilak, Arabinda, Chittaranjan, Sir Jagadish, Sir Ashutosh, Sivaji,. Pratapaditya, Rana Pratap, Kedar Rai, Ranjit Singh and several others, and civilisation was an all-round one and lasted for several centuries. At present, of course, the marriageable age is considerably rising, and with proper education, which, by the bye, is very difficult to attain in the present state of India, self-abstinence will increase, and the blessings of early marriage in accomodating each other from the very beginning of life, so to say, will also, proportionately increase, while child and maternity welfares will be more and more attended to. By the bye, it may be mentioned that there are so-called early marriages, and maternity and child-neglects in the West, though on a less scale than before.

Secondly, as to Widowhood. Did Miss Mayo in her long life not meet with a single widow or spinster in her society who devoted her life to abnegation, religious submission and benevolence? Can she not even conceive of such an idea? Or is she so grossly mundane that she thinks the material and sensuous pleasures of life as the summum bonum, takes the saintly type of persons as crack-brained and imagines them as suffering from misery when they themselves are happy? Of course, the miseries that can be found among old maids or widows that re-marry in western society can also be found in ours in a less pungent form, and many more widows are being re-married in our society than before though up to a reasonable age. Still, a set of voluntarily self-sacrificing men and women given to the good of others with a high ideal to guide them is an indispensable asset to any civilised society. The mentality of our widows is too high for Miss Mayo or Mr. Pilcher to grasp, though she may to some extent profit herself by a re-study of the lives of Florence

Nightingale, Sister Dora, Christ, St. Sebastian and other saints of the west, and of the Institution of Monastery.

A word here as to the urgency of the present work at this stage may not be amiss. It is admitted that no sermon or example can open the eyes of the bigot who is submerged in the meshes of his self-conceited theories and will in no way be reasoned out of them. Still, from the subjective side of human nature, protests, however weak, arise to rebut ill-conceived theories and their expressions, especially when they are directed against the 'fair sex' of any society. Moreover, silence may be taken as tantamount to tacit consent. Though the lives of Indian great ladies appeared long ago in print, still, a selection to the point just to present the other side of the picture to the perversely blind may at most draw the sympathy of the real friends of India or at least soothe the smartings of bitten hearts. The selection has been made from among Indian widows and women whether

married early or late, barring mythological and living characters and being by no means exhaustive; and the moral, we fear, may at times prove too high for Miss Mayo and her admirers, though quite natural to and appreciable by our society.

Here • we must gratefully acknowledge our debts to the different authors from whose works we have collected the materials of this work.

SAROJNALINI DUTT.

The noble work that is being done by the Sarojnalini Dutt Association of Calcutta and its well-nigh 300 branches spread over Bengal and outside is widely known. The idea originated in Mrs. Sarojnalini Dutt, though she could not see its fruition in its present form during her life-time. She was an ideal wife and matron at home and an ideal public-spirited lady outside. She imbibed the b-st of Western and Eastern civilisations, and her life is an eye-opener to the unsympathetic critic, western or eastern, and the dogmatic conservative. She herself attained an all-round development, being proficient in the arts and practices hitherto relegated to man's province. The too forward as well as the too cautious among social reformers may well get salubrious lessons from her life-story. The encomiums, memorial meetings and monuments after her death speak volumes regarding the position she occupied in the hearts of her

admirers and country-people. We have therefore dealt with her life rather elaborately. Our poet says, "India will not wake, so long as its women do not wake." Col. Anderson said to Sarojnalini, "When Indian women will come out of seclusion like you, and exert their utmost for the uplift of their country, we shall have no need to remain here".

Sarojnalini was born on the 9th October, 1887, at Bandel in the District of Hugli in Bengal. Her father was Mr. Brajendranath De, once officiating Commissioner of the Burdwan Division. She was married in 1906 with Mr. Gurusaday Dutt, I.C.S., who has become popular owing to his works in connection with the Sarojnalini Dutt Association and the agricultural and industrial improvements of his country, and has become more so by his Judgment in the Bamoongachi shooting case. Two years later their son Birendrasaday was born. After strenuous works for her country, she prematurely passed away in January, 1925, at the age of 37 years.

One of her uncles was the poet Siddheswar Mitra who used to write poems on her. Another was the famous writer Siddhamohon Mitra who made her the heroine in his novel 'Hindupore' making her an ideal Bengali woman and an embodiment of Hindu songs. He wrote a poem on 'Naughty Sajja' as he used to call her.

Naturally she was loved by her relations. She imbibed the fine traits of her character from her parents and grandmother. She was at first taught by a governess and a private tutor along with her brothers and sisters. Once at her sixth year she went to England with her parents and remained there for six months. She learnt afterwards mostly from her husband. Though she could speak fluent English, she loved her mother-tongue more. She supervised her boy's education and helped her husband in his poetry and essays. She learned typewriting to relieve her husband and kept strict accounts in beautiful handwriting. She used to write in Bengali and English magazines. Her work 'Travel in Japan' has been publish-

ed in Bengali after her death, and her 'Travel in England' will be published soon in Bengali. She used to keep Diary, and wrote and replied to letters punctually with an open heart. Among her manifold public works, she devoted much attention to the spread of female education among her country-women. Her Mahila Samitis at Bankura. Birbhum. Rampurhat, Pabna and Darjeeling established and encouraged many girls and schools. It was her invariable practice to request the local leaders at every reception or farewell meeting to start a girls' school with female teachers at every village. And by her earnest efforts the seclusion of ages was broken, and purdanashin women attended prize-distribution and other meetings, while grown-up girls joined schools. Her idea of female education was liberal and practical, and within it she meant to include such things as cooking, nursing, sewing as a profitable art and domestic economy. She referred in an essay to a sight she saw in Japan of girls of ages ranging between four and twenty-four going to schools on foot, primary edu-

cation there being compulsory. Though she herself did not read in school, she referred to the sweetness of school-life very often.

Among her other accomplishments may be mentioned here those relating to Painting, Sewing, Singing, Playing and Hunting, Domestic management including hygiene and nursing and Social amenities at home and abroad. She adorned her house beautifully according to eastern and western styles on ordinary occasions, birthday-celebrations of her husband, son and father, and their own marriage-day celebration, at tea and dinner parties, etc., with flowers, plants, pictures and furniture with embroidered coverings of her own making. She could sing sweetly. The poet and dramatist Dwijendralal Roy once taught her a few songs, engaged a music-master for her and invited her to see his 'Durgadas' staged at the Star theatre. Mr. Dilipkumar Roy who is famous for music also in Europe frequently invited her to music-parties; and once she requested him to select a harmonium for her. She induced Rabindranath Tagore to sing with the bare clapping

of hands at the Bolpur Santiniketan. Once an adaptation on Pramila from Michæl Madhusudan Dutt was staged in her family and once the Birbhum school-girls played 'Shaibya' at her initiative and guidance for war-funds. She knew how to play on guitar, Esraj and violins which last she loved most. Once in Japan she sang Bengali songs before 750 school-girls. At another time she sang Swadeshi songs in Bengali, viz. 'My country' aud 'Bande Mataram' before a gathering composed of high officials including Europeans. She taught her boy how to sing, beginning from the Bengali lullaby songs of childhood. She and her husband together sang ordinary and religious songs.

She could play badminton, tennis, golf, bridge, etc. She played tennis with her Sarhi (high-bordered cloth) and conchshell bracelets on and she was regarded as an expert by her friends including Europeans. She did not hate but played Bengali indigenous games with children. Once in London she taught Babu Bhupendranath Basu the card-play of 'patience'. At another time

she learnt 'Russian Patience' from a Japanese friend, and taught it to others. She could ride even from childhood, and afterwards became a good rider, having to ride sometimes 30 miles at a stretch. She invariably accompanied Mr. Dutt in tiger-hunting expeditions, whether on elephant's back in the Nepal Terais or Purnea jungles, or on foot in the Sunderbans. There she gladly suffered privations and sometimes showed manly courage and fearlessness. Whether she had to wade through mile-long knee-deep mud and watery rice-fields, or to sit on wooden rafts on a swollen river, as she had to do when she went to see the Amjorah embankment, or to cross over rice-fields in the dusk by narrow balks on foot and then to fight herself in putting out a bustee-fire, or to pass 30 or 40 miles of rugged ways at a stretch with her baby in carts,—she never shirked any privations for her own comforts. Alone she drove tandem in Calcutta streets, and drove motor-car with Mr. Dutt. In London, for about three weeks she

had to go twice alone and back through busy streets to the Nursing Home where she took Mr. Dutt for an appendicitis-operation.

With rare exceptions she followed Mr. Dutt everywhere, and they jointly fulfilled their private and public duties. She helped him even in office-work, kept bank-accounts for him, and, in short, disengaged him as much as possible from the ordinary household duties. She wrote long letters, even at an advanced age and at the cost of others' criticism, to Mr. Dutt, when casually separated. After the Partition of Bengal she advised him to come to Bengal and not to remain in Bihar; on another occasion she asked him to accept Collectorship on giving up the more lucrative Judgeship, so that he might serve people better.

Her ordinary duties may be here summarised. In the morning she rose and prayed; supervised her garden with Mr. Dutt, herself planting and digging where necessary and plucking flowers and fruits; walked with Mr. Dutt; entered the store-room,

outed the necessaries, peeled vegetables with own hands, prepared sweets, curries, preserves and pickles, supervised regarding kitchen-cleanliness and tidy arrangement of everything, attended to washer, and fed family. Next she wrote letters to friends and relatives and in connection with the female associations she started, took to home-industries, including sewing ; prepared betels, read newspapers and magazines, recited new songs ; took off Mr. Dutt to office sometimes, went thence to market, and took him back from office. In the afternoon she served tea to husband and friends gathered ; played tennis with him and attended outside meetings. In the evening she went to the houses of relations and friends and spent it in talks and merry-making. After supper she took accounts from the cook and servants ; sang with Mr. Dutt ; prayed ; and then retired. In the midst of all these duties she could find time to learn lessons from Mr. Dutt. She never sat idly, sewing in times of leisure or while in train. She kept watch over servants, and sometimes cleansed

with her own hands when they were negligent. While Babu Bhupendranath Basu was ill at Darjeeling she prepared 'Sandesh' (sweets) according to his wish and gave them to him. She knew indigenous medical remedies, and had a strict eye on hygiene. She tended cattle, had the cows milked in her presence, boiled water where necessary and looked to the minute points in regard to hygienic matters. She nursed with total self-abnegation day and night. A reference was made already when Mr. Dutt underwent an operation in London. On another occasion when a medical man with uptodate apparatus could not locate coal-dust in Mr. Dutt's eye, she, while lying ill, extricated it to his great relief. She kept accounts to the very pie and no one could cheat her at purchases. In times of transfer she laboured much to pack sundry things with her own hands when necessary.

Her style was simple and indigenous. She wore 'Sarhis' of Indian make and 'Khaddars' even when abroad. With great difficulty she might be induced to wear costly

garments and ornaments. She tried to introduce 'Charka' in Girls' Schools. Once in times of difficulty she gladly offered her ornaments for sale, though there was no occasion for it. "To possess superfluous money," she said, "only takes away peace and often makes one foppish and vainglorious." Once she presided at a meeting in plain dress, though she was critised for this.

She dressed her hair according to western fashion, and even learnt single dancing in obedience to Mr. Dutt's wishes. She gradually by her persuasive arts and love, won him over to change his foreign manners and ideas and the rationalistic tendency he imbibed from the agnostic literature of the West and its haughty individualistic civilisation. She herself wore vermilion, iron chord, etc. When she went to Sylhet at her father-in-law's house, she cast off shoes and endeared herself to all by her affable manners. She never took meals before her husband, even if she were to fast the whole day. She did not allow him to touch her legs even in illness. She never

called him by name, and stopped the family practice of calling her elder brothers and sisters by names. She was a lover of 'touchiness' as the act is nicknamed, and insisted on daily baths and the washing of hands, feet and mouth before meals, She loved betel, often gave them to European guests even after dinner, and took spices to use them after meals at others' houses. She observed the Indian 'Vijoya-Dasami' day, held the ideals of Sita and Sabitri in high esteem, followed the 'stri-achars' (female customs) at the time of marriage and cut jokes with the bridegroom as prevalent in the Bengali society. She believed in the immortality of soul and found joy and union everywhere. She did not like the shaking of hands, and often nonplussed the seekers of her hands by her simple smile and salute with folded hands. She did not like the sight of any woman smoking nor the practice of ball-dancing. She did not love sham and luxury and she openly protested where she found wrong and falsehood. She did not like flattery and was a respecter of sterling qualities

wherever found. She believed in God's mercy and for this belief combined with her loving nature and perseverance she could found 'Mahila Samitis' at such backward places as Bankura and Birbhum. At dinner and tea-parties given in London, Darjeeling and her ordinary places of residence she used to make all the arrangements in decent ways and made them enliving by her conversations and dealings as evidenced by Mr. Dunn, Sir R. N. Mukherji, Professor Sunitiranjan Chatterji and others. She had a knack of making everybody her own. She always volunteered in social functions and often served articles of food with her own hands. In short, her character may be said to have consisted of the opposite qualities of mildness and strength, beautifulness and activity, sweetness, and capacity, fearlessness and purity, cleanliness and frugality, tastefulness and want of grandeur, conservatism and reformation, patriotism and freedom from bigotry and superstition, and house-wifery and service of society.

She mixed with many European and Bengali families even from childhood. In after-life she travelled abroad and had to mix with several foreigners including high personages. She was invited at the Buckingham palace and had the honour of talking with Their Majesties the King-Emperor, the Queen-Empress and also the Prince of Wales. Once she joined a party at the Lord Mayor's palace. In Japan she had opportunities to mix with Marquis Okuma, Marquis Hayasi and the British Ambassador of Tokio. While in England she was assisted by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu in getting a thorough insight into the workings of the several institutions for the welfare of women and babies. In Japan also she studied similar institutions. She went with her husband to meetings for recruiting during the Great War; gave the recruits a send-off at the station; fed with her own hands a band of recruits that came from outside; and through her 'Mahila Samitis' sent sundry articles to the soldiers at Mesopotamia. She once brought Sir Surendranath Banerji to lecture on

recruiting at Bankura. For all these acts the Government awarded on her the title of M.B.E., and she also received rewards and certificates from the Red Cross Society. By the bye, her sense of dutifulness may be exemplified here by her refusals at Darjeeling once to attend a theatre-party in honour of the Governor's wife and on another occasion to join a big tea-party, because she had to attend some functions for the uplift of her country-women. In this connection it may be mentioned that she once acted as the Polling Offiicer for recording female votes for the Calcutta Corporation, though she preferred agitation regarding other more serious matters than female franchise. Once she went to the Bengal Legislative Council to hear the debate. She used to say, "Education, Service and Union—these three things are necessary for the country."

She started four or five 'Mahila Samitis' as mentioned before. She joined all similar associations in Calcutta, including the Calcutta League of Women-Workers, the Banibhaban and the Nari-Siksha-Samity, either

as member, treasurer or secretary. The Banibhaban (widows' home) was left entirely in her charge. She was made a member of the Council of the Nari-Siksha-Samity, and her idea was to make it the head-quarters in Calcutta with affiliated branches in the mofussil. This idea fructified after her death. At the Calcutta Peace Exhibition she successfully managed a stall for women's articles, and at the Baby-week Show at Town Hall she lent her active help. Then, at the Calcutta Mute-Show for War-funds, she dressed herself as an ideal Bengali woman. She encouraged the institution of Girl-guides. In Sylhet she became the Vice-president of the Women's Association. The Darjeeling Female Industrial Institution was turned according to her suggestions into a 'Mahila-samiti,' and health-lectures for Bengali, English, Nepalese and Bhutia girls were arranged. Once a speaker was sent by her from Calcutta and on her then going to Darjeeling she saw no arrangement had as yet been made, and though the time was short, she went from house to house and the

purdanashins' attendance was secured. With the help of the Bankura Mahila Samiti she worked for the uplift of local women in matters of school and Zenana education, sanitation, midwifery, baby-welfare and economic independence, these being her objectives everywhere. There she sent plates, cups, etc., for the hospitals, arranged for the patients' food, caused the women to go there and even nurse patients and saw that her arrangement was followed. At the Birbhum famine of 1918 she opened cheap rice-shops through the Samiti's collections. She emphasized on mother's education first of all. At a prize-distribution meeting she arranged for purdah and brought the purdanashin women there; they there declared a prize for boys on the best essay on 'Mother's Influence on Education,' and the boys also began to be thus influenced. She made acquaintance with women by inducing them to come in Town Hall meetings, theatre, etc. She prayed to God for the success of every meeting. She herself attended all agricultural and industrial meetings to train herself

for her public works, and at mofussil exhibitions she was invariably present on the ladies' day. She went even into the Zenanas of Mahomedans and Marwaris. Once she thus settled a long-standing dispute in Kissengunj between two powerful Mahomedan families. Even Mahomedan women came to her house. In the famous Dumraon Raj case, she had to stand the test of cross-examination in court, because, standing behind the purdah, she had heard the Rani's words at the time of adoption. She was against purdah, caste and untouchability. She even worked among the lowcaste dirty people. Once in her own house and on another occasion in a dirty narrow lane, she arranged for ladies' meetings. She allowed her carpets to be spoilt, took the dirty children on her lap, inquired of their wants, gave advice and sent them off one by one to their respective homes. Regarding widows, she tried for their economic independence. As to their marriage, if they are willing, they can marry—this was her opinion. She was against child-marriage.

RAMABAI SARASWATI

Pundita Ramabai Saraswati is another illustrious lady of modern times whose dream of life long before she became a Christian and after consisted in Indian female-emancipation and uplift of widowhood. Moreover, she was an erudite scholar of Sanskrit and some other Indian vernaculars, and wrote a few works for Indian girls and also her famous book 'The High-caste Hindu Woman.' Being herself a widow and having suffered from privations all through her life, she devoted her heart and energy towards alleviating the miseries of Indian widows and spreading female-education wherever she went, thereby carrying into execution her father's lifelong desires. Though brought up in an orthodox family, she married late and that according to the Civil Marriage Act, before she went outside India and was converted into Christianity. We take pride in her as an Indian; and though she followed the more modern social

ideals in her life, she could not escape the miseries of creation but did not re-marry which fact the one-sided critics of Miss Mayo's type may well take a note of.

Ananta Sastri was a Maharastra Brahmin of the District of Mangalore, who was educated at Poona. He could not educate his first wife because of her strenuous opposition and that of his family-members. When she died, he married Lakshmibai. He was determined to educate his wife this time, and to avoid protest left his home with wife and took shelter in the forests of the Western Ghats amidst wild animals and numerous privations. Lakshmi became learned soon. In their new house two daughters and one son were born, Ramabai the youngest being born in 1858. Lakshmi began to educate Ramabai. The latter loved books very much from the beginning and as she had a wonderful memory could recite, when twelve years old, 18,000 Sanskrit verses from the Puranas. She learnt also Marhathi, Kanarese, Hindustani and Bengali. Her father supported himself and family

from rice-fields and cocoanut-plantations. But he spent much in providing for pilgrim-guests and resident students, in gifts to Brahmins and for pilgrimages and also in his eldest daughter's marriage. So gradually his properties were sold off, and when Ramabai was nine years old, the family became wanderers on the face of this earth, though her education was not even then neglected. At this time once for eleven days they lived on tree-leaves, water, and a few wild dates. Her father became blind. They went to a village-temple at the foot of a hill for shelter but were driven away. They proceeded to another village where her father died of fever. Her mother also became ill, and they were given food and money by the public to go to Raichar. There she once had to beg a piece of coarse bread for her mother from a neighbour which, however, the latter could not take. She lost her mother a few days after. With the help of two Brahmins the corpse had to be taken to the burning grounds three miles distant, she herself being one of the carriers.

Her elder sister also died before of starvation.

So, at the age of sixteen Ramabai and her brother were left alone in this world. They roamed from place to place, preaching on female education, including a study of Sanskrit and the vernaculars. Their sufferings regarding food, clothing and shelter at this time were untold, but they carried on their mission with undaunted perseverance, and at last they came to Calcutta. There she lectured on female education in fluent Sanskrit, and the Pundits were greatly amazed. They then tested her, and gave her the title of 'Saraswati'. Then she went to Dacca, preaching on her favourite theme. There her brother died, and she now abandoned herself entirely at the mercy of Providence.

Then she went to Sylhet, where, in a big reception-meeting, Rev. Prize, the founder of the Sylhet Mission School, read the eulogistic address Here, at the age of twenty-two, she was married to Babu Bipin Bihari Dass, M. A., B. L., Vakil, and a fellow of the

Calcutta University, and author of 'Introduction to Chemistry' in Bengali, of village Latu in the District of Sylhet, in accordance with the Civil Marriage Act III of 1872, both being of liberal views and her husband belonging to the Saha community. They went to Cachar where her husband was practising. A daughter Monorama was born to them. But, as ill luck would have it, Bipin Babu died of Cholera after about nineteen months from the date of their marriage.

Again she became out, preaching on female education wherever she went. She at last came to Poona, where she began to preach against child-marriage and on female emancipation and education, basing her lectures on the ancient Hindu Scriptures, She then established the 'Arya-Mahila-Samaj' and its branches in the mofussils throughout the Maharastra province. She also began to write and translate in Marathi for her purpose. She succeeded in inducing the Bombay people to found associations and institutions for female

education at several places. In 1882 when the Education Commission arrived at Poona, they were received by three hundred women of the 'Mahila-Samaj' of Ramabai, she being the speaker. In her evidence before the Commission she pressed on the necessity of girls' schools with trained women-teachers and inspectors and also on that of the medical education of women; and the President had it translated into English and printed for circulation.

She now went to England for learning English, and was there welcomed by the Sisters of St. Mary's Home at Wantage, it having a branch at Poona. In 1883 she and her daughter became Christian. She learnt English for one year. In 1884 she was appointed Professor of Sanskrit in the Cheltenham Ladies' College. There she learnt Mathematics, Natural Science and English Literature.

Sm. Anandibai Joshi, a high-caste Hindu lady of Poona, who had followed Ramabai to England and was then in America and about to graduate as M. D., invited the

latter to witness the ceremony. So she went to America in 1886, and remained there for three years. There she was appointed Professor in a girls' school. She saw the public-school system of Co-education, and underwent a course of Kindergarten-study in a Philadelphia training school. She secured good friends and financial help, and her work 'The High-caste Hindu Woman' was published, its profits being devoted to educational matter for her projected school. She collected money for about 600 electrotype plates for the illustration of her complete series of books, viz., a primer, five graduated reading-books, a geography and a natural history for India, all to be written in Marathi and for Indian use. The idea, however, did not fructify. Throughout the United States she addressed on the education and uplift of Hindu widows. In 1887 the 'Ramabai Association' was formed with its head-quarters at Boston, its object being to found 'Ramabai Circles' all over the States with members who were to contribute or collect a sum annually for ten years

for a home and school in India for the education of high-caste Hindu widows. She also went to Canada. In November 1888 she left for India via San Francisco and Hong Kong.

Now she made a small beginning at Poona and established the Poona Widows' Home with a school with the help of Miss Soonderbai. Here orthodox customs were observed and child-widows were taken care of. With the surplus-money from the American charities she took care of a number of poor girls, whether orphans or deserted wives. She established a farm with fruit-trees at Khedgaon to increase the income, Indian endowments not being wanting. At the terrible famine of 1898 raging in the Central Provinces she rescued about 3,00 girl-widows. At that time she wrote an article in the 'Bombay Guardian' which was reprinted separately. She translated the Bible into Marathi and wrote 'A Life of Christ' in vernacular and several other pamphlets on Christianity. In 1911 she was awarded the Kaisar-i-Hind medal for her various munificent works.

SARODAMONI DEBI.

This divine lady, who is commonly known as 'Mother', was the fit consort of the famous saint Ramkrishna Deb of Dakshineswar, regarded as an Incarnation of God by his devotees. As there are several persons of higher types of mind in the West than those of Miss Mayo, Miss Stanhope, Lady Sanger and Dr. Freud, for example, for whom really the West is rising in the scales of civilisation, and as savants like Max Muller, Romain Rolland and the like have appreciated Ramkrishna Deb in his true light, and as the Vedantic institutions of the United States of America are opening the eyes of the materially absorbed West, it is not idle for us to expect that the life-story of Sarodamoni Debi will at least to some extent be understood by the western society. From our angle of vision the ideal of morality has fallen low in the West, and, though after the great War Church-attendance is increasing, stories of scandals even

in Churches are not rare. Still we believe there are two types of persons in every society, and our hope lies in the more advanced section of mankind who think otherwise than in terms of colour and race, brute force and aggrandisement, materialism and pure earthliness, war and nationalism, and subjection of womanhood and labouring mass. In the hurry-worry of restless pleasure-seeking, we cannot abolish high ideals, and they are to be determined by the consequences. And, of these, those of female chastity according to the prevalent acceptance of the term, widowhood, asceticism and spirituality, among others, are still the specialities of Hindu India.

Sarodamoni was born in 1853 at the village of Joyrambati in the District of Bankura in Bengal, she being the only daughter of Ramchandra Mukhopadhaya. She was married at the age of five. Ramkrishna (then Gadadhar) was of an ascetic turn of mind from boyhood. To bind him, as it were, his mother and brother were searching for a suitable bride. At last,

Ramkrishna himself referred to Sarodamoni. So, he was married at the age of 23 years on the gift of a bride's dowry of 3,00 Rupees. Some ornaments were taken in loan from a rich neighbour, and given to the bride at the time of marriage for being worn. After the marriage, Ramkrishna had to take them off from the bride's body, when she was asleep. Such were their pitiable circumstances. The bride's uncle accordingly took her away on that very day.

In her seventh year she was brought according to custom to her father-in-law's house at Kamarpukur, about four miles distant from Joyrambati, in company with Ramkrishna. Before coming, she hid herself in her father's house ; Ramkrishna's nephew Hridoy had to find her out. and there he worshipped her feet. This effusion of reverence the Westerner ought not to lightly flout at. The loss of this sort of reverence and the dissolution of joint-family have been the progenitors of many of our social ills.

After this, she once came to Kamarpukur from her father's house in her thirteenth

year, and remained there for one month, Ramkrishna being engaged in his devotional methods at Dakshineswar. After six months she came to Kamarpukur again, having remained there for six months. This time also Ramkrishna was at Dakshineswar. Three or four months after this event Ramkrishna came to Kamarpukur with his then preceptor, a she-ascetic, and Hridoy. Sarodamoni was brought accordingly, her age now being 13 years 6 months.

Ramkrishna thence took upon himself the task of teaching his wife in worldly and spiritual matters. By examples and precepts he gradually trained her to be his fit wife. No bodily connection of the grosser sort was ever thought of, and the ordinary relations of husband and wife were sublimated into what is known as "Spiritual Marriage". Herein lies the peculiarity of Ramkrishna. No small credit is due unto Sarodamoni, because of her receptivity of the teachings of her husband and her strength to rise above the flesh when tempt-

ations created most opportune circumstances. The advice of Totapuri, one of Ram-Krishna's preceptors, was to see 'Brahma' in both males and females, and this test he successfully passed in company with his wife, female devotees and other females including even the corrupted. Sarodamoni was an immature rural girl, and Ramkrishna taught her plastic mind in the ways he desired. He taught her the duties towards God, preceptor, guests and others; and he taught her how to deal with everyone with perfect abandon unto God and how to spend money and do household duties. He moulded her more fully when she afterwards went to Dakshineswar. There he taught her the objects of man's life and how to deal in one's own house and those of others. Even the minutest details, e,g., that concerning the placing of a wick in a lamp, were not disregarded, He advised her to go first in a carriage or boat, and to get down last, after seeing as to whether any articles were left in it. He taught her songs, 'Kirtans,' worship, meditation, process

of trance, ecstatic bliss and knowledge of 'Brahma'. He used to say, "Just as Uncle Moon belongs to all, you will also see God." As he acted towards his other disciples, so he loved and advised her, saw that his advice was followed, rectified her mistakes gently and encourged her.

After a few months Ramkrishna came back to Dakshineswar, and Sarodamoni went to her father's house. She expressed that she felt great joy and calm bliss at her husband's behaviour. She became quiet, meditative, contented, self-sacrificing and benevolent. She felt no want in her, and shirked no physical hardships to attain bliss. She was Sympathy incarnate towards others and felt no resentment for any contumely offered to her.

When she was eighteen years of age, vilifiers began to throw criticisms at her by calling her 'a mad man's wife', reporting that her husband at times beeame naked and roamed about crying 'Ma, Ma,' and in many respects distacting her. She thought that if that were so, she must go to Dakshines-

war to see, and, if necessary, nurse him. So, she with her father joined a party about to start in order to bathe in the Ganges near Calcutta. She went on foot, because the only other conveyance, viz., a palanquin, was costly. She was laid down with fever on the way; on the next day, however, they all started, she sitting in a palanquin. When she reached Dakshineswar, Ramkrishna felt greatly anxious, and, after his supervision day and night and proper nursing after keeping her in his own room, she recovered after three or four days. It was arranged that she should remain with her mother-in-law in a different room. And she began to serve her husband and mother-in-law. This time she remained there for four or five months. From after this time she used frequently to come from Joyrambati or Kamarpukur to Dakshineswar, and remained there for longer times. She cooked for her husband, mother-in-law and several daily guests. She had to cook separately for her husband, because he could not take all the preparations of food, and, for

widows, at times she had to cook thrice or four times daily. Few persons saw her at the time. She rose at 3 A. M. and finished morning duties and bath in the Ganges. One night in darkness she almost trampled upon the body of a crocodile. Then, finishing every thing before people rose, she entered her room and took to worshipping. Still, when Ramkrishna was suffering from throat-cancer at Shyampukur in Calcutta, she nursed him among male attendants. There, also, she slept from 11 A. M. to 2 P. M., and rose from bed before 3 A. M.

Ramkrishna, as said before, saw 'Divine Mother' in Sarodamoni and so got over the fleshy instincts. At night they used at first to be on one bed. He entered into trance, and remained in that state throughout the night. She also helped herself and her husband in this conquest of the flesh. When Ramkrishna was entranced for hours, she got afraid, and so he advised her to utter God's names in his ears at that time and to bring him back to his natural state. He

was entranced in the daytime also, and looked like a dead man. At last he advised her to sleep with his mother.

After one year, when Ramkrishna thus succeeded in seeing in her nothing but an embodiment of 'Divine Mother', he worshipped his wife who was eighteen at the time, as 'Shorashi' (a name of the ten manifestations of 'Divine Mother') according to the Tantric rites. Towards the latter part of the worship, she became entranced.

Once a Marwari gentleman offered 10,000 Rupees to Ramkrishna. He did not touch coin or valuable metal and so he asked his wife to take the amount, in order to test her. She replied that her taking would be tantamount to her husband's and so, in spite of poverty, she declined to take the amount.

On several occasions she had to come to Dakshineswar on foot. Once her companions got in advance of her in order to hurriedly cross over the fields noted for dacoities before dusk. She was met on the fields by a Bagdi (low-caste) dacoit and his wife. She

called them father and mother, and they gave shelter and food to her in the night, and with paternal care took her off to Tarakeswar where her companions were waiting. On parting, the dacoit and his wife actually wept and gave her presents, and she asked them to go to Dakshineswar afterwards. They really went some time after to Dakshineswar with presents. Such was her presence of mind, simplicity, suavity of conduct and capacity to turn even enemies into friends.

Ramkrishna died in 1887, when she was thirty-three years of age. She saw, or she believed she saw, his spirit coming down to her and imploring her not to put on the dress of a widow. So she used to wear a cloth of thin red border and bangles for some time afterwards, and then she put on a widow's dress. After 34 years of widowhood she died in 1920 at the age of 67.

India's females are mostly free from the faults of contagion with western society. And the qualities that are found in them still constitute the mainstay of our family

and social lives. In spite of the remarks of the Sadler Commisson, we enjoy more happiness in our married lives. In the present case, Sarodamoni, by her life of devotion, simplicity, penance, sacrifice and love for all, service, disinterestedness, patience, forgiveness, was extremely happy according to her own admission. No third person of a baser type can bring her down from her high pedestal and call her unhappy according to a grosser standard. In the earthly sense she did everything that was expected of her in more beautiful ways, barring, of course, the cravings of the flesh; she prepared herself for the real life beyond and she set up an ideal in this materialistic age by which our society may be rejuvinated.

MATAJI TAPSWINI.

This lady is generally known by the above name which means "Mother-Ascetic". She is one of the innumerable pious, sacrificing, celibate bands of ascetics that contributed to the moral, spritual and social uplift of India before and after Mahomedan times. She was born at Raisthan at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and died in the first quarter of the twentieth century. She was the daughter of the princess of Nellore in the Deccan who was married to the prince of Raisthan. In her childhood she learnt to worship the goddess Durga from her mother. She became versed in the Vedas and the Tantras, being a profound Sanskrit scholar. In the hot days of April and May she performed the sacrifice of "Five Fires" by sitting from sunrise to sunset for forty-one days amidst fire burning all around her, and thereby gained occult powers. She practised penance and austerities for several days over the hill

Agastyapur on the bank of the river Tamralipta in the Madras Presidency. Her motherly halo forbade males to look on her with sinister object. The King of Raisthan, her grand-father, gave one-fourth of his kingdom to her. But she remained single and became an ascetic. She loved her subjects as sons and inculcated education and piety in their minds, they being happy under her. However, she left her estate in the hands of her brother, and secretly left Raisthan.

At Naimisharanya (Nimsar) she established a temple with the help of Mr. Thomson, Commissioner, the husband of Lady Buty who was bred at the Raisthan Palace. She took gems worth two crores and a half and began to spare them one by one at the places where she became a guest. She travelled throughout India. Once she bought most of the property of the deposed Nawab Sujadali Beg of Oude. She lived there for some time, making liberal gifts, and was called 'Maharani' by the local people. Then she went to Nepal, and did several monumental works there. She established the

temple of Ganga Debi near Pashupatinath, arranged for her worship, and spent many years there, making yearly celebrations in honour of the goddess and distributing freely. The yearly Rathajatra celebration of Nepal was started at her initiative. She went to Darbhanga, and spent fabulously at the Ramlila festival.

Her chief and last act was the establishment of the Mahakali Pathsala in Calcutta. She travelled over all the chief places of Bengal. In Calcutta she went over 5,00 houses to see the Durga Puja. Once when she was going to see the immersion procession through the streets of Calcutta, she heard one girl say to another, "These images are built of mud and straw, we should not worship them". At once she inquired and found that the saying was the off-shoot of Missionary teaching. She then took up the idea of establishing a girls' school on idigenous lines with religious end moral instruction within the curriculum. She consulted with the late Narendra Nath Sen, the editor of 'Indian Mirror', got the order, as she said,

of the goddess Kali of Kalighat ; and the Mahakali Pathsala was the result. Here she herself taught the girls how to worship and recite religious hymns, and sowed the germs of religious and moral education that would be useful in family-life. Here was the true basis of female education on national lines over which the liberal and extensive type of modern times, though sometimes exotic and theoretical, grew.

SARALA DEBI.

This lady is different from her namesake, the celebrated writer and patriot Sm. Saralabala Debi Chowdhurani, B.A. We shall depict her life-story, however small it may be, as she stands as another model of the combination of the best qualities of western and eastern civilisations and as another beacon-light both to the pleasure-seeking and home-disrupting West as well as to the dogged and bigoted conservative East.

Sarala Debi was the late wife of the late Hon'ble S. R. Dass, Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, and the daughter of the famous counsel Mr. P. C. Sen, Advocate-General of Rangoon. Brought up in such rich families, she was simplicity incarnate and highly religious as will be shown later on.

She was born in May 1887 in Chittagong, and, when six months old, was brought to Rangoon. She was admitted into the Methodist School at the age of five.

After four years she passed the Primary Examination, standing first in the Rangoon Division and securing a monthly scholarship of 8 Rupees. Though the school-authorities loved her and did not like to part with her for the qualities of her head and heart, her father brought her and her two sisters to Calcutta and had them admitted into the Bethune School.

She did not at first know how to read and write Bengali, because she learnt English and French only at Rangoon and mixed with European or western-educated families. So she at first took up French as Second Language. She read many best French books, and afterwards translated a French book into English. From the Second Class she intended to take Bengali as Second Language. So she began to learn it from the celebrated poetess Sm. Kamini Roy, B.A., who was a teacher and afterwards Lady Superintendent of the Bethune School. She passed the then Entrance Examination, standing first among female students and getting a scholarship

of 2,0 Rupees and many prizes. Strangely but rightly she stood first in Bengali, getting the 'Keshabchandra' prize of 1,00 Rupees ; and with a portion of this amount she bought books, and gave 5,0 Rupees to some orphanage. The list of books for the prizes was left to be selected by Sm. Kamini Roy, and on one occasion Lord Elgin, as president, said, "They would form the nucleus of a library." Out of about 1,000 Rupees secured in scholarships and prizes, she spent almost the whole amount for helping poor students, male and female. Every month she used to hand over an amount to Srijut Kedarnath Mukhopadhaya, a friend to the Brahmo students, to be spent for them, and, when her funds fell short, caused her mother to continue the help. Once she gave 2,00 Rupees to a teacher, and parted with her rare valuable article, to be presented by a poor female relation as dowry for a bride, while she did not herself present anything at the time.

At her sixteenth year she passed the then F. A. Examination, standing ninth in

order of merit. After two years she got Second Class Honours in B. A. in English, standing tenth. She could not prosecute further studies, though Dr. P. K. Roy earnestly requested her to do so, because of the disadvantages of co-education.

Principal Sm. Kumudini Dass loved her. Sm. Kamini Roy regarded her as her third sister. She dedicated her Bengali poem 'Amba' to her two sisters and Sarala Debi, and presented some best English books to her. Sarala did not keep Sm. Kamini Roy at a respectable distance, but, by childish simplicity and freaks, snatched, as it were, spontaneous love from her. The latter selected many books for her study, and Sarala was her best pupil. Both kept connections with each other throughout. Sm. Roy speaks highly of Sarala's thirst for knowledge, disattachment to objects of enjoyment, high ideals and restlessness for doing something great in this world.

She studied many out-books. She read and recited Dr. Rabindranath Tagore's works, and, according to Rabindranath's advice,

she began to learn Sanskrit from Pundit Shibdhone Vidyarnaba as a preliminary to writing in Bengali. She used to write in 'Indian Messenger' and the Bengali monthly 'Mukul'. She generally talked on high subjects with everybody including her sympathetic biogropher in Bengali, Srijut Amritalal Gupta. She used to hear stories from him, even after marriage, and these included the lives of Raja Rammohan Roy, Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, Keshabchandra Sen and others. The famous poet Nabinchandra Sen loved Sarala Debi like a daughter, and once after her death, when Amritalal Babu went to him, the poet referred to the former's article on her in the Bengali magazine 'Nabya Bharata' and gladly ordered for a presentation of all his works to Amritalal Babu. Sarala Debi could draw paintings.

She did not agree to marry till the passing of the B. A. Examination. After mutual introduction and choice the happy marriage took place, but the tie lasted for four years only till the hands of Death took

her off. The objects of both were the same and they raised themselves in each other's company. They could not endure separation for a long time, but, when it was the call of duty, no selfish interest was allowed to intervene. Once in the plague-infected Bombay Mr. S. R. Dass was to remain alone for about a month or so, but Sarala Debi, though anxious on her own account and for the health of her husband, did not disturb him there. In her Diary she wrote in one place that her love for God should be greater than her selfish love for her husband, and that she prayed accordingly. By the bye, her Diary reveals her devotion to God, prayerfulness, anxiety for not doing something in this world, strict self-introspection and premonition of her own early death, and contains her notes and reveries after a study of great authors.

She became a true help-meet to her husband. She sometimes cooked, showing kindness to the poor sick cook. She managed household duties with her natural gifts, though she was simple and inexperienced, compa-

ratively speaking. In her early life she could not have the opportunity of mixing in Bengali society ; still her dealings endeared her to all. She took the optimistic view of life, free from the mire of this world and was as simple as a child. Mr. S R. Dass used to consult her in everything, and she like a true wife disenaged him from the ordinary worries of the family, so that he might attend to his practice more fully. She was bashful as far as necessary, though simple to a degree, and did not like fickleness of any sort as opposed to pure mirth. She was loved by her parents, companions, well-wishers, teachers, husband, relations and in short every body with whom she came in contact. When her mother was in Calcutta, Sarala Debi used to supervise the training of her brothers and sisters who gladly obeyed her her orders. She cherished deep reverence for father who was initiated by Keshabchandra Sen, for whom she entertained high regards. Her mother also used to consult her often.

She joined the Brahmo Samaj in Calcutta and Darjeeling. She loved the sermons of

Pundit Sivanath Sastri, and even asked him to pray at her marriage by cancelling his trip to Beluchistan. She asked him once to convene religious meetings for grown-up girls in the way similar meetings for boys were convened by him. She read religious books, and prayed every night before retiring. Sarala Debi got fever in her last days. At that time, though her husband used to sit by her after court-hours, she requested him to take outside air or play tennis. She recovered from this fever. On the 28th of November, 1901, she had an intense colic pain in stomach, and, after best medical aid, died.

AGHOREKAMINI DEBI

Aghorekamini, the mother of the celebrated doctor Bidhanchandra Roy, M.L.C., of Calcutta, was born in 1855 at the village of Sripur in the District of 24-Parganas in Bengal in a respectable Kayastha family She was married at the age of ten to Prakashchandra Roy who was only eighteen years of age and was reading in a college after passing the Entrance Examination. She had three sons, and two daughters. She died in 1896 at the age of 40 years from rheumatism of the heart after a life-long period of service and piety.

At the time of her marriage a funny incident took place. She got up on the roof of her father's house one day out of childish curiosity to see her would-be husband, because she felt naturally abashed to see him before all, and fell down in the garden underneath, though the hurt was not a grievous one.

Both husband and wife were pious and devoted, and both were real help-meets throughout, a rare thing after all. By her suavity of temper, devotion and energy, she gave her husband comfort and strength, and the latter in turn with full heart sympathised and acted in consort with her in the daily duties of life, service to mankind and worship of God.

After her marriage, Aghorekamini had in accordance with her husband's wish to go against certain customs of the family, because they seemed to be against their conscience, and so suffered from criticism. But otherwise she gladly attended to all the house-hold duties. This early work fitted her for future life of service and benevolence.

Prakaschandra was at first a Postmaster at Burdwan. There Aghorekamini could save some amount by strict economy from his small income. He was transferred to Harinavi. Here they could mix with the family of Pundit Sivanath Sastri, the famous Brahmo leader, and learnt the

value of united prayer and the secret of social progress in making the unit of the family devoted to God. He became a Deputy Magistrate, and was transferred to Matihari in Behar. Prakashchandra was influenced by Keshabchandra Sen and his Brahmoism, and, previously, when he went from Calcutta to his home, he secretly prayed with his wife at night and gradually turned his wife's inclinations towards Brahmoism. He had deep and reverential piety, high ideal regarding women's objects of life and intense love for his wife. His ideal was divine, and he wanted her to follow it. They both succeeded in securing this ideal.

At Matihari, inspired by the precepts and examples of the Brahmo preacher Aghorenath Gupta. she got initiated into Brahmoism. She now introduced family-prayer. Henceforth, before every work she did, she invoked the bliss of God and prayed. With Prakashchandra's monthly pay they used to enter into the prayer-room, and after prayer began to dispose of the amount in fixed items of expenditure.

Prokashchandra was transferred to Bankipur. Here the couple vowed not to keep bodily contact with each other for six months for spiritual advancement. The vow was extended lifelong. She reduced her style to the minimum of simplicity, used to wear henceforth coarse cloth of Behar handloom, gave up her ornaments for the help of the famine-stricken, and curtailed her hankerings for the gross and the material. Gradually, the mere remnant of fleshy contact, viz, kissing, was also discarded. The husband with his own hands cut her hair. They went to Rajgir, the famous pilgrimage of the Buddhists. There both shaved their heads, and after deep supra-mundane prayers, they celebrated their 'spiritual marriage' with due ceremonies as mentioned in the Nabasamhita of Keshabchandra Sen, viz, union between soul and soul, and unlike that of the Roman Catholics. The husband's age was 35, and the wife's 26 at this time. This pure dedicated life, with fight, practice and constant prayer resulting in heavenly bliss.

and disinterested love, cannot be understood by the materialist and agnostic of to-day, and he will naturally misconstrue it. In this case 'woman's cause was man's, and 'man's cause woman's', and they both rose together and set living examples to others. After this spiritual marriage, they lived according to the ideal of the Gita, in disattachment and disinterested service towards humanity as will be seen from the example given below. Compte could not evolve a better ideal. In this connection, it may be mentioned that Lady Sanger and the Birth-Control League ought to get ample lessons from the living example herein depicted, and Mahatma Gandhi's correspondence with the former ought not to be thrown into the waste-paper basket.

She was called 'householder-ascetic' (Karmayogi of the Gita) by her husband. They merged into each other in their daily duties. Before rising from bed, she used to chant hymns of 'Mother' with her husband; then she cleansed the prayer-room and was in waiting for

her husband, the worshipped and prayed together. She felt unrest on the day she could not pray well, and then took to scanning out her inward faults.

At this time, she went to join the Brahmo Samaj (Nababidhan) celebration in Calcutta, heard Keshabchandra's and the ladies' united prayer, and herself prayed. Keshabchandra at the very first sight recognised her worth, and told other girls to learn devotional prayer from her. When she said to Keshabchandra "Please, don't forget", Keshabchandra replied "Can it be forgotten?"

Her heart now yearned for the uplift of of the girls of Behar, Bengali and Hindusthani, because that time there was no proper girls' school in Bankipur. So she prepared herself at the age of 35 to learn school and boarding management by joining the Thoburn Girls' school at Lucknow. This was not improbable for her. One anecdote may be mentioned in this connection. While she was travelling with her

husband, they came to see the hill of Chitrakut. Now, there was no conveyance except horse. Fragile and untrained though she was, she rode on horse-back and succeeded in the mission. Similarly, this time also, she made up her mind to go alone to the Thoburn Girl's School, leaving her duties towards husband and children unto God. Though Miss Thoburn was for relaxing the strictness of rules in her case, she observed them scrupulously. Her daily routine at boarding and school then stood thus: from 4-30 to 5 A.M. prayer; between 5 and 6 taking food, clothing and cleansing room; from 6 to 10-30 attendance at school; between 10-30 and 12 bath, food and rest; from 12 to 5-30 P.M. study again at school; between 5-30 and 6 food; from 6 to 7 song and recitation of divine hymns; from 7 to 10 study again at school; between 10-30 and 11 P.M. singing songs; then rest. She did all this punctually to a minute. She used to labour 14 hours daily in learning English and Hindi, and, when tired, went into the prayer-room and got fresh energy. Sometimes she spent

4 hours in counting God's names. She did not take any good food, because her husband was not there to partake it. Onee an English woman presented her with a bunch of grapes. On her taking only one, the lady replied, "Mrs. Roy, you have surely attained God; please, don't forget me." At times the devoted Miss Thoburn embraced Aghorekamini, being deeply moved by her conduct. She also learnt kinder-garten in the school, and was much profited by the companY of European ladies.

At this time, the news of the serious illness of her son Subodh (now Mr. S, C. Roy, Bar-at-law) reached her. She only prayed to her 'Mother' and hid herself in her arms. Her letters of this time to her husband show her deep devotion to him, her heart's pure outpourings and her sore anxiety for her husband—"I want more trust in the world, so that it may trust me. When every atom of my bone will cry 'truth, truth,' on that day I can say that I have trasted the world. O, Mother! bring that day. I am

happy to learn that you do not beg for Mother's works. How I wish that our brothers and sisters all contribute towards Mother's Service. ! When shall I be fit for you ?..I shall carry out even with my life what you advise me to do. So long separated, we have been united by our spiritual marriage. What more difficult work Mother will charge me to do ? If the work is not finished, I shall die in the of doing it. If she wills that it is done by me, I shall succeed. Will not Mother's wish be fulfiled with all my blood ? When I think Mother has brought this life for you, how happy I am ! Though approaching nearer and nearer, will not the fulfilment ever come ?"

She returned after nine months. There was a small girls' school in Bankipur, founded by the famous Vakil Guruprosad Sen. There were only 10 girl-pupils. Now Aghorekamini took charge of this school, and said "No money, no pupils, no teachers. Very well. I shall roam from village to

village, and from house to house, to collect money and succeed in my endeavour." The boarding was lodged in her house. She used to call it 'her family'. After her death it was called 'Aghore-family'. No undue pressure was put upon any one for funds. The establishment was maintained by voluntary payments, and the deficit was made up by Prokashchandra. Boarders and pupils gradually increased. The school was affiliated upto the Entrance standard. At last it became the best girls' school in Bihar.

She began to labour heavily for the school, being punctual to a degree. Her labour consisted in supervision over boarding girls and her own boys' study and food, nursing in disease, teaching lower class-girls and kindergarten to infants and cooking to elderly girls, procuring pupils by going over even to Hindusthani gentlemen's houses and in arranging for sundry school-affairs. Her only helpers were Srijut Guruprosad Sen and Prokashchandra. Her usual prayer, meditation, self-introspection, counting God's names, and study of religious books went

on. From communion she used to derive great strength.

Commissioner Mr. Boulton (afterwards Secretary) remarked to her, "Very glad to see the school. In London such works are done by maids and widows. You have husband and children, still you have so many works to do. This is indeed rare." The Government began to give monthly aids to the school.

Many persons, including the distressed, gathered in their rooms to get counsel, consolation and succour. The acts of her service in relieving the miseries of the diseased are numerous. Whenever she heard that some one, male or female, was suffering in a Bengali or Hindusthani's house without proper nursing, she at once went there, if necessary on foot, whether in winter or at dead of night, be the patient rich or poor. Once in winter at 1 A. M. she went to nurse the son of a Brahmin lady. The son, however, died. She herself procured Brahmins to carry the dead body and made necessary arrangements. She fed some cold drink to

the disconsolate mother. Then she returned home at 9 A. M., and after praying and taking a little milk, went to the school.

Once a late pupil of hers was suffering after delivery. She went, herself cleansed the room, and called a Doctor. The pupil's end approached. She asked her to pray, and the latter died in peace.

The celebrated preacher Pratapchandra Mazumdar writes—"Her life was consecrated for service to others. Once an unknown high official's wife was suffering at the time of delivery. She went and nursed, but the child died. Every year she went with others to Rajgir. On the way 'Kirtans' were sung and religious advice given to the passers-by. At Rajgir festivities were held for two or three days. She was noted for self-sacrifice in service; energy in the accomplishment of good deeds, disattachment, purity of heart, and faithful devotion. Prokash and Aghore were mutual helpers."

At last her health broke down. Still she continued in work, service and the propagation of religion. She writes in her Diary,

"Here my work is at an end. No relish in work here. I am anxious for the other place and its customs. Teach them to me, O Mother!"

A few days after, she was attacked with rheumatism of the heart; the doctors could not do anything, and she passed away.

In this case, the results of early marriage were good. The unity of the couple was an ideal one, the sons have become famous men, and the services that the whole family did are worthy to be recorded. Her health broke down because of over-work. The vow of continence practised by Aghorekamini and Prokashchandra is the true moral and hygienic remedy as opposed to the contraceptive methods of the Birth-Control-Leaguers. There was no question of the purdah. Education was of the right sort. She belongs to modern times and the much-abused Bengali race. The husband's health was all right. Will this open up the eyes of Miss Mayo and her sycophants?

RANI SARATSUNDARI.

Saratsundari was born at the village Puntia in the District of Rajshahi in Bengal in a respectable well-to-do Barendra Brahman family in the year 1849. Her father used to spend much in hospitality and charity and for worship of God. Her mother was a pious lady with sweet temper and mildness of character. Saratsundari inherited these qualities from her parents. She was married at the age of six years to the Kumar Jogendranarain Roy, aged 12 years, of the Puntia Raj. She became a widow in 1862 at her thirteenth year. She afterwards adopted a son, who also died. She died in 1885 at the age of 37 years.

In her very childhood she prepared idols from clay, adorned them with garden-flowers, and worshiped them. One day when her father came out of the Deity's room, she went inside and sat to worship it. There was a lamp burning, and her valuable cloth caught fire. She at once soaked the burnt

place in the washings of the Deity, and afterwards explained the matter to her mother.

One day when her father was about to beat a tenant of his, she began to weep profusely ; so the tenant was saved. On another occasion her father fined their cook to the amount of 5 Rupees ; she secretly paid the amount to the poor cook.

She began to call her husband 'Fair Bridegroom', as at that age there was no idea of shame in her mind. The ladies of the house by way of fun caused her to cry, and the Kumar solaced her, because he loved her for her simplicity and affability.

Kumar Jogendranarain was educated in Calcutta, his estate being under the Court of Wards. He came back with liberal ideas, and, on attaining majority, he took up the management of his estate in his own hands.

Owing to his initiative, Saratsundari began her education. She had natural parts and put an intense application to the prosecution of her studies. Sometimes she

read when all were sleeping, and sometimes in moonlight. She learnt Bengali very well, and Sanskrit to some extent. She read the best books and periodicals of the time. She patronised many good writers. Her principal officer's son was the writer Srishchandra Mazumdar, whom she regarded as her son and with whom she had discourses in literary subjects.

Afterwards, she gave regular helps to many schools and tols (schools of the old style for teaching Sanskrit). She spent lots for the improvement of the Rajshahi College. Many poor students prosecuted their studies at her expense, and she loved them as her own sons. Regarding female education she held enlightened views. She herself established a girls' school.

Her husband asked her to openly mix with him. She could not do so, having been brought up in a conservative family. He had no restrictions as to food, and one day he asked Saratsundari to partake of the remnant of his meals. She said that if the food was cooked in her presence, she

might comply with his wish. Here she regarded the mandate of her 'still small voice within' as superior to the whimsical dictates of her husband. Barring these minor details, they loved each other intensely.

When widowed, she no doubt felt a great shock. But she abandoned hereself to the Providential Dispensation, and, with her husband's memories cherished in her bosom, she began to lead a life of sacrifice and disattachment, and adopted the strict rites of widowhood voluntarily. She wore coarse cloth, cut her hair short, shunned the touch of gold and once in the day took 'habishyanna' (parched rice without meat) on a plaintain-leaf. Her bedding consisted of a piece of mat only in summer and an additional mattress with a sheet in winter, and a pillow, and she laid herself down on the ground, being surrounded by a group of widows, relative or otherwise with whom she took her meals and sometimes went to the Ganges in Calcutta. It was a veritable 'widows', home', the

number sometimes approaching one hundred, and she sympathised with them in their various sufferings. She kept correspondence with the famous philanthrope Pundit Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, the pioneer, so to say, of widow-remarriage in India, and with whom she entrusted her adopted son's education.

After her husband's death, the estate at first was managed by the Court of Wards, and, then, it reverted to her in 1864. She skilfully managed her estate. Her officers sent important letters, records and account-books inside, and she saw them and ordered as she thought fit. For her capacity, kind-heartedness towards tenants, liberality in dealings, noble character and affable nature, and her charitable disposition and expenditure for good works, she was highly regarded by the Magistrate, Commissioner and Revenue Board Members. Once the wife of a Magistrate, herself an Englishwoman, asked her why she should not re-marry. She heard with suppressedire and replied, "It is a sin for a Hindu widow even to think

of re-marriage." At the Delhi Durbar she was conferred the title of 'Rani.' To show honour on the occasion of the Prince of Wales' visit in Calcutta, she distributed 1,300 blankets to the poor. She could honour her country as well. When Sir Rameshchandra Mitra was promoted to the officiating Chief Justiceship of the Calcutta High Court, she gave a great feast to the local gentlemen, and distributed 1,000 blankets to the poor. In Lord Ripon's time she convened a meeting for supporting the Local Self-Government policy.

Her acts of charity are too numerous to mention. Some have been mentioned before. A few more may be cited now. In the flood at Rajshahi, she helped people without considering as to who their respective landlords might be. Once a fire caused havoc among the Puntia peple. She similarly extended her motherly hands for the succour of the distressed. At a famine she gave help to the famine-stricken for three months; on some days about 1,000 people came to

her palace and were helped. If a poor woman could go inside and make her statement to the Rani, she was sure to get about three or four Rupees from her. None returned baffled from her. Even middle-class persons who could not approach her were enquired of and helped. When she heard that another was suffering for want of proper nursing from some disease, she sent doctors, and when there was no proper diet for a patient, she arranged for it. She regularly contributed towards the upkeep of several dispensaries. Once she was living in a house in Calcutta on the bank of the Ganges. Several supplicants surrounded her there, some for the relief of their mishaps, some for their daughters' marriages, and some for procuring funds for noble institutions. A funny incident may be mentioned here. She gave 5,00 Rupees to one; in the newspaper the amount of gift was written as 1,000 Rupees; and, so, the donee again came and demanded the remaining amount which was paid. Sometimes her treasurer used to give a less amount

than what was ordered because he thought that at this rate the coffer would turn empty, and only on such occasions she scolded any of her officers.

In religious matters Saratsundari generally followed the rites of the Hindu religion of the conservative type. She worshipped, observed penances and vows, fasted and followed other strict rites. Her health broke down accordingly. Her offerings to God she gave away to beggars. In her pilgrimages extending nearly over the whole of India, she renounced the relish of good fruits one after another, by dedicating them to God. She built a mud-built house for the celebration of the "Jagaddhatri" Puja ; there for some time she lived with several others, worshipping, feedin andg distributing. She kept a diary for self-introspection. She was hospitable to guests of all religions, and entertained liberal views towards other faiths and in social matters. She had a regard for Maharashi Debendra Nath Tagore who regarded her as her own daughter, and inquired about the Brahmo

Samaj. Once a Brahmo preacher could not find shelter in Puntia. She herself asked him to preach on the courtyard of her palace, cooked herself and fed him on a huge scale beyond his comprehension. She spent for the Brahmo temple, Christian church and Mahomedan mosque as well. Once a Mahomedan tenant was fined and was being tortured by her officers for cow-killing. The Rani at once intervened and referred to the killing of goats and buffaloes by the Hindus for the sake of religion, got the Mahomedan released and established full liberty in regard to such matters in her estate.

In 1883 she went to Benares, leaving the estate in the hands of her adopted son. After a few months he died, and she had again to take charge of her property. She afterwards died of fever.

Here is an instance how Indian widows can profitably pass their lives. The object of the rigorous discipline enforced on our widows is to keep them pure and prepare themselves for the next world, though it may

seem too opressive to a few. But it cannot be condemned simply because similar discipline was not prescribed for widowers and western materialism does not sanction it. As the woman forms the nucleus of family and society, it is meet hat so much attention is given to the preservation of her chastity. Even in the West, as in the East, there were several instances of voluntary abnegation by persons of both sexes that led to the good of the individuals themselves as well as to society in general. Misery no one can escape in this world, and none can say that the self-created miseries of the old maids and bachelors, or even of married couples of the West are less intense than those of Indian widows or more purifying. Still the critic may see the efforts of the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj and even of enlightened orthodox Hindus fructifying in the amelioration of the lots of ordinary Hindu widows.

The Rani was married and widowed early, and she betook herself to a life of the highest ideals ever conceived by man.

Early marriage itself ought not to be blamed. "The Indian ideal of marriage is a flower of the sublimated spirit", as Rabindranath Tagore says. No solution of the problem by late marriages also has been arrived at. Mahatma Gandhi says, "The age of marriage is slowly rising amongst the Hindus, but the race is becoming weaker". Religious faith and moral strength nearly gone, poverty and dependence goading, blind imitation of the faults of the West leading astray, the nation is dwindling down, but a ray or two of hope have at last been peeping from the end of the horizon. As to the ideals of Hindu widowhood, it is almost impossible for the westerner to grasp them. Though spiritualism is showing signs of upheaval in the West and there has arisen a craving for a civilisation that can give rest to the uneasy soul, the mass worships Mammon, and cares only for material comforts. If God and after-world are believed, and if the acts of this short life can be supposed to be done mainly for the formation of the mind as a preparation for

the life ever-lasting, then only the ideals and practices of Hindu widowhood can be appreciated. The gross submerged in the mire of materialism and carnality can but pervert them. The Rani's education, charity, liberality in social and religious matters, capacity to manage big property, hospitality and sympathy for the distressed, individualism in following the dictates of conscience at all costs, and loyalty with patriotism are an object-lesson to the people of any country. Superstition is a relative term, from which the West has not emerged, and the kernel ought to be taken instead of the chaff. So the Rani's acts cannot be called superstitious. Idolatry is prevalent in the West in a different degree, vide, for example, in the Chicago Address in the Parliament of Religions delivered by Swami Vivekananda, and there are various grades of worshippers for whom different forms of worship are prescribed beginning from gross idolatry to absolute monism. But, in this respect, the West is yet to learn from the East. And so we should better stop now.

TORU DUTT.

This life as well as that of Sarala Debi present similarities in many respects. Both had natural parts of a high order, were products of a mixture of two enlightened civilisations, having been nurtured in early life amidst western influence, belonged to high families and died before the full blossom of life at nearly the same age. As will be seen later on, both were keen students throughout, kept diaries, were loved by persons with whom they came in contact, attended to domestic duties, were highly religious and were inspired by lofty ideals. In addition, Toru Dutt was a poetess of the first order, and that in an alien tongue, though her father was a Christian, studied Sanskrit and Hindu traditions and mythological works, and produced poems which breathed forth almost in every line Hindu ideals and beauties of Indian scenery, in order to present them to the ignorant Western

reader. The works that Toru did in her short life will amply prove that it was well spent, and mere longevity without usefulness is no criterion of the value of a life.

Torulata Dutt was born on the 4th March of 1856 in the family of the famous Dutts of Rambagan of Calcutta. She was the youngest of the three children of Mr. Gobindachandra Dutt. The eldest brother Abju died in 1856 at the age of 14. Her sister and intellectual companion Aru died of consumption in 1874 at the age of 20, three years before Taru's death. The famous Rameshchandra Dutt, who was by the bye a Hindu, was the nephew of Gobindachandra. Gobindachandra was pious and saintly, and possessed a keen intellect. He and his brother Rai Bahadur Shashichandra Dutt produced a book of poems named "Sorrow and Song." Gobindachandra was a man of liberal views, and he began his children's education under his own supervision. Toru easily learnt the alphabets, and began to hear Pauranic

stories from her mother very attentively. Her brother's tutor Satishchandra inculcated in her a love for the study of English, and under her tutor Sibnarain Bandopadhaya she began to deeply study books like Milton's 'Paradise Lost' at such an early age. She showed evident signs of genius even at that time. Her school-life was very short as will be shortly seen.

In 1869, Gobindachandra went with his wife and two daughters to Europe with a view to the latters' education. They were admitted into a French School at Nice in France. After some time they went to Paris. Toru loved French manners and the French language. In a short time she read many French novels and poems. She was then 14 years of age only. What she studied she studied minutely. She could reproduce the original French from memory when she afterwards translated any French work in English. She studied German books also according to one account. English she studied, but to a less extent. She loved France, became glad in its prosperity and

depressed at its misery. When afterwards in London, one day she overheard from her father's conversations about the fall of Sedan in France at the hands of the Germans and then she told this to her sister Aru a-weeping, as disclosed in her diary. She wrote therein, "France, you have fallen for sins and atheism, pray to God, and you are sure to recover." She wrote a French romance ending in tragedy while fn France, but this was published by Mlle. Bader, a French lady, with the author's biography, after Toru's death. She afterwards wrote a poem 'France in 1870' which was included in her 'Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindusthan'. Afterwards, her father publisbed a collection of her poems under the title, 'A sheaf gleaned in French Fields'. Her first essays that were afterwards published in a Bengali magazine were "Two Studies from French Poets." While in Calcutta afterwards she also studied French books, loved very much the French magazine 'Revue des Deux Mondes', and kept correspondence with her friends

in Europe. She also began an English translation from a French book on Indian women. This much shows her love for France, and a French woman might not love France more.

From Paris they went to Italy for some time according to one account. One of her poems bears reference to Italy. They then went to London in 1870 when she was fifteen. There she made acquaintance with many. She began to learn music. Her father read with them the best essays of the famous British writers. In 1871 the whole family went to Cambridge. There she attended a course of lectures in a Girls' High School. Miss Shore was astonished at her correct English pronunciation and experience in western manners.

In 1873 they returned to their homes in Calcutta. Her subsequent four years' life-events can be gathered from her letters to Miss Martin. Sometimes she lived in Calcutta and sometimes in the Bagmari garden-house. She did not generally mix in any society whether Bengali or Anglo-

Indian. She became out only at times of airing. As Aru died, she became her father's companion, and they read books together. She loved even animals, domesticated or wild, and gardens and flowers as shown by her poems. She was conversant with all current social or political questions. Her Letters some of which were collected after her death show her wide range of knowledge, critical power regarding the books she read, poetical genius, premonition of her early death and attempts for cheerfulness in spite of painful diseases.

In Calcutta she began to study Sanskrit with keen interest, having finished 'Vishnupurana,' 'Ramayana,' 'Mahabharata', etc., within a short time. She composed poems from two stories of the Vishnupurana—'The Legend of Dhruba' and "The Royal Ascetic and the Hind'—which were afterwards incorporated in her 'Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindusthan.' Her intense labour for the study of Sanskrit broke down her health. She was attacked with consumption, and died on the 30th of August,

1877, at the age of 23 years and 6 months.

She attended to household duties. She could sing very sweetly and play on piano. She was charitable, and often relieved the poor. She was full of humility, and yet not wanting in moral courage. She was opposed to wrong of any sort, and had at times to argue even with her father to change his wrong views.

Toru Dutt heads the list of the Bengali writers of English verse towards the end of the 19th century. Edmund Gosse observes, "It is difficult to exaggerate when we try to estimate what we have lost in the premature death of Toru Dutt. Literature has no honours which need have been beyond the grasp of a girl who, at the age of twenty-one and in language separated from her own by so deep a chasm, had produced so much of lasting worth. Her power of expression in English was astonishing, while yet her interest in the religion and philosophy of her own ancient race was vivid. When the history of the literature of our country comes

to be written, there is sure to be a page in it dedicated to this fragile, exotic blossom of song."

In point of physical agony and early death, and in the production of poetry of the first order, she resembled Keats. Her poems contain vivid descriptions of nature—fields, gardens, birds, sky, morning and evening—including its lonely and sombreside, and we see there our favourite champak, lotus, cuckoo, bamboos, tamarinds and peepuls. She depicts Indian scenery with village, pasturelands, hunting, simple folk, sorrows of widowhood, modern purdah, human passions, love and beauty. She seems to be the Hindu of Hindus when she deals in fatalism, life's vanity, doctrine of 'Karma' and Reincarnation, belief in omens and occultism and God's appearance before man. She gives out the best ideals of the Hindu social units—son, brother, wife, disciple, ascetic and devotee. She outdoes her predecessors in this interpretation of the spirit and civili sation of her country before the West.

Her book of poems 'A Sheaf gleaned in French Fields' was published in 1876 by her father. Within a few days, the first edition of the book, worth about 6 or 7 Rupees per copy, had marvellous sale in England and France, and was exhausted. It was favourably reviewed in France by Andre Theuriet in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Maud Diver in her 'Englishwoman in India' says, "This first book, though the least polished of her productions, is by no means the least interesting, abounding, as it does, in countless instances of the power of genius to override all obstacles, though inevitably baffled here and there by mists of ignorance and inexperience. The complete adaptation of her mind to Western ideas is little short of marvellous; and when we remember that she wrote entirely in a foreign tongue, the grace and purity of her diction are as admirable as they are surprising." The book cannot, however, interest Indian readers.

In the above work she translated some 70 or 80 French poets in about 2,00 poems. Her commentaries also show deep erudition.

Great French poets' works have been mostly evaded, and many good poems of smaller poets are also wanting in the translation. The translations, however, preserve the beauty of the original. Eight translations of Aru have also been included.

It was published at Bhawanipur in Calcutta at the 'Saptahiksambad' press, the printing and paper being shabby. At first it was taken to have been written by some Anglo-Indian with a *nom-de-plume.* It accid enltally fell into the hands of the famous critoic Edmund Gosse who criticised its faults in the 'Examiner,' but on the whole praised it.

Her immortal work which secured her fame was "Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindusthan." It was first published in 1881 in London after the death of the poetess with a biographical memoir by Edmund Gosse. Dr. Garnett included some of its legends and ballads in his 'Hindu Poetry.' It contains nine poems, of which 'The Legend of Dhruba' and 'The Royal Ascetic and the Hind', both in blank metres, were published

in the 'Bengal Magazine' of 1876 and 1877 respectively. There are some minor poems at the end depicting her own life and surroundings. We can select here only a few cullings from the gems of her poems.

Her scepticism in the subject-matter of the poem "Ancient Ballads" is described in the following lines :—

> Absurd may be the tale I tell,
> Ill-suited to the marching times,
> I loved the lips from which it fell
> So let it stand among my rhymes.

In *Prahlad* again :

> Whether in pity for the youth
> The headsman would not rightly ply
> The weapon, or the gods in truth
> Had ordered that he should not die.

Her political views may be glimpsed from the following lines of *Prahlad*:—

> The echoes ran from hill to hill,
> "Kings rule for us and in our name,"
> Tyrants of every age and clime,
> Remember this . . . .
> As human, peoples suffer pain,
> But Oh! the lion-strength is theirs,

Woe to the King when galls the chain!
Woe, woe, their fury when he dares!

Again:

What is rank or caste?
In us is honour or disgrace,
Not out of us.

In *The Royal Ascetic and the Hind* she flings at the author of the story because by thinking on the Hind at the last stage the Royal Ascetic was caused to be born as a Hind in the next birth, and also at the Ascetic who flies from this world:

What a sin to love,
A sin to pity! Rather we deem,
Whatever Brahmins wise or monks may hold,
That he had sinned in casting off all love
By his retirement to the forest shade,
For that was to abandon duties high,
And like a recreant soldier leave the post,
Where God had placed him as a sentinel.

Savitri is the best poem of the set. But Savitri's individualistic spirit is entirely a new creation as shown by her words on her husband:—

He for his deeds shall get his due,
As I for mine. Thus here each soul
Is its own friend if it pursue
The right, and run straight for the goal,
But its own worst and direst foe
If it choose evil.

Both *Savitri* and *Sita* may be profitably read by the Westerner, as depicting the best ideals of married life.

The miseries of Widowhood are thus described :—

And think upon the dreadful curse
Of widowhood, the vigils, fasts,
And penances ; no life is worse
Than hopeless life,—the while it lasts.
Day follows day in one long round,
Monotonous and blank and drear.

The Purdah is of recent origin as the poetess says :—

In those far-off primeval days,
Fair India's daughters were not pent
In closed Zenanas.

Her philosophy may be glimpsed from the following lines :—

Time changes deserts bare to meads,
And fertile meads to deserts bare ;

Cities to pools and pools with reeds
To towns and cities large and fair.
Time changes purple into rags,
And rags to purple. Chime by chime,
Whether it flies, or runs, or drags.—
The wise wait patiently on Time.

The following lines of *Our Casuarina Tree* are reminiscent of Keats:

Ah ! I have heard that wail, far, far away,
In distant lands by many a sheltered bay
When slumbered in his cave the water-wraith
And the waves gently kissed the classic shore
Of France and Italy beneath the moon,
When earth and sky lay tranced in a dream-
less swoon.

Again :

O, ye sylvan gods that dwell
Among these dens and sombre shades,
Where voices in the breezes swell,
And blend with noises of cascades.

RANI RASHMANI

Rashmani, who was called 'Rani' (Queen) by the people, was born at a village near Halisahar in the District of 24-Parganas in Bengal in the year 1794. Her father was an agriculturist and belonged to the Kaibarta caste (lower in social status). For her beauty she was married at the age of 11 to Rajchandra Marh, the son of the rich Piritram Marh of Jaunbazar, Calcutta. She had three daughters. She became a widow in 1837, and died in 1861 at the age of 67 years.

Her husband left 68 lacs of Rupees in cash, shares in the Imperial (then Bengal) Bank to the extent of 8 lacs, and a Loan-amount of 3 lacs, besides landed property. She successfully managed and enlarged her big estate with the help of her sons-in-law. At the time of the Sepoy Mutiny, while others were selling Government Promissory Notes at reduced rates, she purchased several from such sellers, and so ultimately gained. At

the Sradh (funeral feast) of her husband she gave cloths to the poor and fed them, the Brahmins and others on a huge scale. She like her husband was pious and charitable to a degree. The famous temple of Dakshineswar which is connected with the hallowed names of Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Vivekananda, Sister Nivedita and the Ramkrishna Mission, and where the Vaishnava, Shakta and Shaiva sects united, was established by Rani Rashmani. It was because of the Rani and Mathuramohan Biswas, her son-in-law, that Ramkrishna Deb's liberality in devotion grew uninterrupted and developed fully. One anecdote may be mentioned here. At a time when Ramkrishna Deb did not grow into fame, one day he was singing religious songs in a temple of Dakshineswar and the sole audience was Rani Rashmani. The Rani seemed distracted, and Ramkrishna Deb struck her with his hand, admonishing her for brooding over litigation-matters at such a place and time. Such an incident roused an uproar. But the Rani appreciated that she was really

thinking as described, and acknowledged Ramkrishna Deb's monitorship even at that time, and so the matter was settled. Her acts of piety were numerous. The silver car of Jagannath that is led in Calcutta at the Rathajatra festival was built by her. The diamond crowns of the three deities of the Puri Jagannath temple were given by her. She used to rise before daybreak, counted beads before the Deity, worshipped regularly, managed her estate, spent lots in charity, led the rest of her life in strict abstinence befitting a Hindu widow, and passed away in peace. Is this life not enviable to any Western widow or old maid?

One anecdote regarding her veracity may here be mentioned. One day, while coming by boat on the Ganges, she was attacked by pirates near Chundernagore. At their request she forbade her escort from fighting, gave them whatever she had with her, and promised 12,000 Rupees to the 12 pirates. This promise was kept. In spite of the much vaunted 'parole of honour', in these days of time-serving diplomacy, can any

westerner conceive of, much less practise, such an act of righteousness? And such instances are not rare. They ought to open the eyes of traducers of the following of Lord Macaulay and Lord Curzon, and, as Burke said, one who indicts a whole nation ought rather to indict himself.

The following anecdotes show the Rani's moral courage, presence of mind, resourcefulness and capacity to fight with a stronger opponent. The Durga Puja was yearly celebrated at the Rani's house with great eclat. One year a European gentleman instituted a suit because of the disturbance he felt at the heavy noise of music played at the Puja. On the next day the Rani carried a bigger procession with more noisy music over the street constructed by her husband, alleging that if her right be interfered with, she would destroy the street. She was fined 5,0 Rupees. Thereupon the Rani fenced the whole of the street from her house at Jaunbazar up to the Babu Ghat, thereby stopping all traffic. The Government's repeated strict orders and requests elicited

the reply from the Rani that the Government might purchase the street at due price from her. At last the fine was refunded, and the condition was that in future a license would have to be taken from the Government for any procession with music.

In the Ganges the fishermen had been enjoying the right of fishing by nets. The Government imposed a tax. No big leaders could find out the remedy. So an appeal was made to the Rani. The amount asked by the Government for the fishing right on the Ganges from Ghusuri to Metiaburuz, about 5 miles in distance, viz. 10,000 Rupees, was now paid by the Rani. She then netted with bamboos interspersed the two sides of the above length, so that no ships might pass, on the ground that her fishing business would otherwise suffer. At last, the amount was refunded, the tax was repealed, and the fishermen were saved.

Once, some drunken European soldiers were molesting and committing acts of violence on the passers-by over the street in front of the Rani's house. Her son-in-law's remons-

trance excited them more, and they in a body looted the Rani's house, oppressed the servants male and female, and damaged valuable articles, while the Rani kept herself ready with open sword in the room of the family Deity to protect it. At last the curtain was somehow dropped ; the Rani refused with thanks the compensation offered by the E. I. Company (the then Government) and the Company arranged for soldier-patrols at the Rani's house from that time.

Could any western woman or man show better resourcefulness under similar circumstances? Is any country-woman of Miss Mayo ready to dispute the greatness of such a lady, or has she any better object of life in view? Of course, we refer to the sane and thinking folk, and not to the biassed or the butterfly sort or to the misanthrope blind to the good of any one because she has failed and suffered in life? And such examples are not exceptional. In the present case, the Rani was married at the age of eleven. Cases of Harimaitism can be found in every society, but no

question of consent or the evil effects of early marriage could be thought of, such was the high education of the times. So materialism revelling in the gross, and not early marriage itself, that is at the root of the perceptible ills complained of. The Rani with her widowhood and pious life was an ideal to be followed. She lived up to a good old age, and her objects of life were amply fulfilled by her acts. Her education was of the right sort, and not the modern ill education of physique-decaying and useless type, nor the apish one of exotic growth ruining the very foundation and ideals of our society.

RANI BHABANI.

The life of this illustrious lady is instructive in more senses than one. She is noted throughout India for her philanthropy like Ahalya Bai. She passed about half a century of widowhood in strict abstinence and piety, doing what was possible for her in this life as well as preparing herself for an after-world. She was hospitable to all irrespective of caste or creed. She was married early at the age of about eight, but lived up to a good old age of seventy-nine. The fact that she suffered bereavements shows only Providential dispensation, as the best medical men according to their own admission cannot find out the real remedies and at times end the lives of their patients by maltreatment, and the causes so far found of early deaths are not limited to one cause merely. The adoption of most up-to-date sanitary methods is sometimes seen to lessen longevity and stamina, and maternity-complications,

veneral diseases and deaths due to excesses are seen more among those people that have regarded the indigenous customs and rules as superstitious and instead imitated the less far-sighted ones of the West. As in all cases, the path of the golden mean between the two extremes should be followed. From Rani Bhabani's life one can also see how even a woman can skilfully manage vast properties in the midst of anarchy, oppression and brigandage. The attempt on her widowed daughter by oppressors shows the necessary origin of the purdah in Bengal and the consequent numerous evils attending upon subjection. Her education was of the most useful and indigenous type. The present Maharaja of Natore is a descendant in her line, his illustrious father being the late Maharaja Jagadindranath of literary fame.

Rani Bhabani was born in 1724 at the village Chhatina in the District of Bogra in Bengal. The years of her birth, death and other events of her life are given differently in different accounts. Her father

was a well-to-do Barendra Brahmin. She was famous for her beauty and accomplishments. Even from childhood she plucked flowers from the gardens, made preparations for the worship of the deities, distributed rice and other necessaries to the poor, relieved the needy, consoled the grief-stricken and attended to household duties. She was cheerful, simple, amiable, mild, patient and sedate-natured.

The famous Raghunandan Roy became the agent of Raja Darpanarain of Puntia (in Rajshahi) in the Court of the Nawab of Murshidabad. By dint of his genius he acquired vast properties in Rajshahi and other districts of Bengal in the name of his brother Ramjiban who became the Raja of Natore in Rajshahi. Ramkanto was the latter's son for whom the faithful officer Dayaram was sent to select a bride. Dayaram selected Bhabani, and the marriage was celebrated with great eclat.

Ramkanta succeeded on Ramjiban's death. He was incompetent, and became soon corrupted. Once Dayaram referred to this,

and was driven away. He went to the Nawab, and induced him to give the properties to Debiprosad, Raghunandan's son, and 5,000 soldiers to him to loot the Natore palace. Rani Bhabani was pregnant at the time, and, at her advice, Ramkanto fled through a secret passage with no other valuables than the ornaments on the Rani's person. According to one account some Ramratan, and not Debiprosad, got the Nawab's help as described. They began to live in a small rented house, and their condition became miserable in the extreme. One day Ramkanto accosted Dayaram who was going on the street below. Dayaram repented, promised to re-instate him within three days, and wanted 50,000 Rupees for presents and bribes. The Rani gave away her ornaments to Dayaram. He bribed all the employees, from the highest to the lowest, to consent to accost Debiprosad by the epithet 'Wretched' when he would go to the Nawab's palace. This they did on three days and the Nawab also actually took him to be a wretch. Now Dayaram mentioned

Ramkanta's name, and got the Nawab's order to re-instate him. Ramkanta came to his palace, and followed the Rani's advice in every thing. Two of their sons died early, and a daughter Tarasundari was born. But Ramkanta died a premature death in 1746.

Both were devoted to each other. The Rani used to practise vows and penances, make gifts, excavate tanks and wells and construct temples even when her husband was alive. The best things she first offered to God before enjoying herself. Once her husband gave two pearl-necklaces worth 26,000 Rupees each, the better one being intended for the Rani. The Rani first gave it to her Deity and, when she heard of her husband's intention, gave away both to Him After her widowhood she made pious acts the sole object of her life, though not neglecting Zemindari-management. She got Tara married, and made her husband the ipso facto manager of the property. But, as ill luck would have it, he soon died, and Tara became a widow. Once

Nawab Sirajuddowlah, while going by a boat over the Ganges, saw Tara basking her hairs on the roof. Her extraordinary beauty so captivated his mind that he sent soldiers to take Tara by force. It is said that the Rani herself encouraged her successful fighting Sannyasis. Siraj was, of course, baffled.

Now, Rani Bhabani opened feeding-places in her palace. Throughout day and night the lame, blind, poor and beggars were fed. None remained unfed in her Zemindari. She made gift to the Brahmans, residents on the Ganges, beggars and priests, including even Mahomedans among the donees. Yearly she kept an amount of 1,80,000 Rupees fixed for the purpose of gifts. She established Tols (schools for Sanskrit) all round her Zemindari, and used to pay about 25,000 Rupees yearly to the Pundits who used to teach and feed pupils at their own residences. From 1786 she arranged for yearly payments from her property to be made over to the Government, so that the gifts might continue after her death. She freely opened her

purse-strings for the famine-stricken at the terrible famine of 1768.

She adopted Maharaja Ramkrishna as her son. On his attaining majority, she went to Benares through various reasons. When she was about to start with 17,00 boats full of articles for distribution, the people on both the banks of the Pudma actually wept. At Benares she erected innumerable temples and established deities. She constructed three hundred houses there for the residence of retired families; performed others' funeral rites and feasts at her own expense; and established halting platforms with wells, tanks and cooking places at intervals of two miles within a radius of ten miles around Benares. At the Benares Annapurna temple she daily distributed twenty-five maunds of rice. She offered beautiful foods of diverse sorts to the deities, and fed daily 5,000 people out of them. She daily fed 1,08 ascetics, widows and unmarried girls, and gave one Rupee to each after the meals. Even animals were not neglected. Around trees

with birds' nests rice and pulse were thrown, and sugar and sweets were thrown near ants' holes. For all these purposes, 1,00 boats full of articles were yearly sent from Natore. Once the Rani asked one Amritalal, a rich merchant of Benares, for a temporary loan of one lac of Rupees. He at first refused, then repented, and gave away the amount.

For the treatment of her diseased subjects, she employed eight peripatetic medical men, each with two servants and two porters for carrying medicine and diet. She went to several places of pilgrimage. In the Rajshahi district she erected many temples.

After leaving the estate at the hands of Ramkrishna, she went to Benares as mentioned before. On returning from Benares, she saw much of her property lost to establish the foundations of most of the present Zemindaries of Bengal, because Ramkrishna had become an ascetic. She took the management of her Zamindaries in her own hands and accordingly used to live at Barhanagar. Here she established

hermitages for the fighting ascetics, for each of which she gave from two Rupees to twenty daily. She spent there much for guests and charitable purposes. She had fixed rates of expenditure according to different status for others' funeral rites and feasts.

She managed her property successfully when there was anarchy regarding the Nawab's succession, and the Marhatta freebooters were freely looting under Bhaskara Pundit. Once Nawab Aliburdi's family took protection in one of her forts. Though she had to stand against Sirajuddowla, not out of spite, but to thwart his oppression, she, at the conference of the noblemen of the time, alone opposed the inviting of the British against him before the battle of Plassey. She protected the silk and cotton trades of her territories, fighting against the British policy. Once she fell in arrears of revenue unto the English to the extent of 11 lacs, and Mr. Shore was about to divide her property amongst Pattanidars. But he saw adream, as the tradition goes, and changed his plan. She died in 1803.

AHALYA BAI.

Ahalya Bai was an ideal ruler and her philanthropy is unparalleled in India. Though widowed at an early age, she lived a life of strict abstinence and piety, and was a true 'Karmayogini' of the Gita type. Malcolm wrote, "Such an ideal queen is rare in the history of the world" The shibboleth of political unfitness for India may well be brushed aside by the life-story of this illustrious lady among other such innumerable ones. At a time when the Moghul Empire was disrupting and every ruler was trying to gain suzerainty, the Hindu rulers were separated by dissensions, and the Pindari, Rohilla, Jat, Bhil and other freebooters were looting the country, it was no small achievement for a woman to hold the reins of Government skilfully, to appease her subjects and employees, to subjugate the robbers and enemies with iron hands, and to awe into submission the various powerful potentates of India by her very name with

a posse of handful militia. This itself may be a sufficient lesson to the modern Jingoistic nations distrusting each other and failing to abolish war by Disarmament Conferences and Kellog Paet. She is still worshipped in many places, and the whole of India is dotted over with her various philanthropic works. In mgtters of Revenue, Settlement and Adminis tration, her practices are still referred to in critical times. The western critic of the Miss Mayo type may well be profited by studying how a Hindu widow can pass her life in abnegation, disattachment, philan-thropy and piety.

In the history of the Maharastra of Sivaji fame, among several heroic lives may be mentioned that of Mulhar Rao Holkar, Ahalya Bai's father-in-law. Mulhar Rao's father, though originally a Kshatriya, was an agriculturist and used to tend cattle, being an inhabitant of the village Hol, about 40 miles distant from Poona. Mulhar Rao was born in 1693. On his father's death at the age of about five years, he was taken to his maternal uncle's house at a village in

Khandesh. He was engaged in tending cattle. The story goes that a serpent protected him when a-sleep on the field from the sun's rays and the astrologer also foretold his future greatness. His uncle accordingly admitted him into his cavalry. By dint of his energy perseverance and heroism, he gained the hands of his uncle's daughter, the custom being then prevalent, and became a king of vast territories and a leader among his comrades. Peshwa Baji Rao made him commander over his cavalry 5,000 strong, and he gradually got mastery over Malwa till at last the Indore province was given to him as Jaigir. In spite of all his faults, he was one of the greatest generals for all times. He was kind and generous even towards his defeated enemies. His wife was an expert housewife and instilled courage several times into the broken hearts of her husband. Ahalya Bai inherited these qualities from her father-in-law and mother-in-law.

Ahalya Bai was born in 1735 at Pathordi in the district of Ahmednagar in Malwa

where there was a cantonment of the Peshwa. Her father who was connected with the Scindia family was an agriculturist, pious, benevolent and hospitable. At the order of an ascetic, Ahalya's parents went to a temple at Kolhapur, remained there for one year, and at last, as the story goes. the goddess appeared to the mother in a dream. Then they came back, and, as a sequel, Ahalya was born. She read in the village Pathsala. Afterwards she became versed in the Maharastra language and read the Ramayana, &c. She was lean and not fair, but her face was aglow with a divine halo. In the village temple Ahalya was one day chanting sweetly before her teacher, and, Mulhar Rao, who came with his army in the cantonment, accidentally met her. He was pleased, proposed to her father, and got her married with his only son Khande Rao when she was nine years of age at Poona with great eclat. She however, lost her parents soon.

Ahalya won over the fierce natures of her father-in-law and mother-in-law by her amiable manners and obedience. Mulhar

Rao began to fulfil Ahalya's desires, and to obey her even in such things as the taking of a prescribed quantity of water during illness. Though there were several servants, she used to do household duties. She was already initiated by her preceptor Ambadas. Now she secretly went through her worship with due rites and solemnities. She never indulged in luxury. She was naturally devoted to her husband. She made every body her own, including even animals and birds. In 1753, however, her husband was killed in action, when Ahalya was 18 years of age. She did not immolate herself on the burning pyre owing to the importunate request of her father-in-law. She had one son and one daughter. After 32 years of widowhood she died in 1795 at the age of 60 years.

She began to be trusted with the management of State-affairs even from this time. Mulhar Rao went to the battle of Panipat, leaving the kingdom in her charge. After finishing State-duties she went to the river-bank to bathe, worship, pray, and make gifts. Mulhar Rao died in 1765 at the

age of 72 years when she was only 30 years of age. Her real stamina shone forth from this time. Her son Male Rao who succeeded was incompetent, corrupted and oppressive. There were open and covert enemies who raised their heads now.

Gangadhar Yasobanto, Prime Minister, saw that with Ahalya on the throne he would not be able to fulfil his selfish desires, so he advised her to go to some place of pilgrimage with regular stipends from the State and to leave the throne to an adopted son. Ahalya saw into his plans, and replied that it was not time yet for her to relinquish the world. So Gangadhar instigated the Peshwa's uncle Raghunath Rao or Raghobadada to seize the throne. Ahalya soon wrote secret strategic letters to the Bhonsla, the Gaekwar and other Maharastra Kings and chieftains, asking for their help. She also wrote to the Peshwa Madhava Rao and his wife. She ordered Tukaji, her faithful relative, to come, and, on his arrival, installed him as General and gave him in-

structions to be ready at Garhra Kheri. The Gaekwar's 20,000 soldiers and General Devade's army arrived for her help, and she gave them necessary money and instruction. Ahalya herself went to the battle-field on elephant's back, equipped with bow and arrows. She now sent words to Raghoba to pause to consider. But Raghoba did not listen. With 50,000 soldiers Raghoba encamped on the southern side of the river Sipra. Tukaji advanced on the opposite bank, and warned Raghoba. At last Raghoba got afraid, and pretended to have come to show condolence at Ahalya's griefs. Tukaji now took him to Ahalya's palace. There he remained in a beautifully decorated room for one month and was hospitably treated by Ahalya. He tried to induce Ahalya to take the Peshwa's help, but was defeated by arguments and went away. According to one account, Raghoba proposed to her to adopt a son, but she refused. She regarded Tukaji as her son, and gave him her kingdom, keeping only the management of the expenditure for guests, Brahmins and Deities in her

hands. She sent Tukaji to the Peshwa to get his consent because he was the leader amongst the Marhattas. She now invited her helpers in a great feast. She forgave Gangadhar also, and re-appointed him in his former post. But he became an ascetic. One more event may be mentioned in connecton with Raghoba. He wanted for himself the big amount of legacy left by Mulhar Rao to be mentioned hereafter. Ahalya asked him to take the amount, if he chose, as it was dedicated for pious purposes. He asked for war, because like a poor Brahmin he could not accept the dedicated amount. So she went with 500 maidservants, and asked Raghoba to kill them and take the money, because she had no intention to fight with the Peshwa. So Raghoba relented.

Thus by her statesmanship she won without bloodshed. Her victory also shows her mental courage, intelligence, prowess, humility, gratefulness, self-respect and love for truth and justice. All the surrounding powers became now friendly to her. Even

the Kings of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur and Bundi reciprocated presents with her. The Peshwa permitted a man of her choice to be placed as his agent in her State. She established the Holkar State on a permanent basis, and, like a true ascetic, at once handed it over to Tukaji Rao. Tukaji, though older, called her mother. There was no competiton among them, Ahalya not caring for power and prestige. She only cared for acts of piety and the welfare of her subjects, in other matters Tukaji acted as he willed. Tukaji generally followed her orders. She looked, however, minutely into the income and expenditure of the State. Once Tukaji was about to confiscate the properties of a childless merchant's widow. She rewaded her, and at once ordered Tukaji to desist from the crime. On another occasion Tukaji consented to the removal of a high officer from the Holkar State to the Peshwa. Ahalya rebuked him, and he asked for forgineness.

The Marhattas were not completely beaten by the Mahomedans, so the manners

and customs of the latter did not penetrate into those of the former. Hence Ahalya Bai had no purdah, and she sat in open court and managed State-affairs. She was accessible to the poorest subject, and all the applications regarding even a very trifling matter were personally attended to by her. She made certain salubrious rules regarding Revenue, and thoroughly revised the previous settlement. She fixed the subsidies due from feudatory chieftains. She could not bear the sight of any oppression on her subjects, looking to their happiness in preference to mere revenue-collection. She never cheated any subject of his property. The merchants, agriculturists and mony-lenders were happy and flourished. As opposed to current practices, she never confiscated her subjects' money, and allowed them to construct buildings and mount on palanquins. She did not take any gifts from her subjects. Once an officer of hers wanted a bribe of 3 lacs for the adoption of a son from a merchant's widow. She drove him

away, rewarded the widow and son, but did not take the widow's presents. At another time two rich subjects died childless. The widow of the elder brother offered all their properties to her. She did not take them, and advised them to spend the output in charitable and pious acts. On another occasion, according to the prevailing custom, her officers asked her to accept presents from a widow for the adoption of a son. She showed reasons, and did not take the presents.

Mulhar Rao left a legacy of property with a revtnue of 76 lacs and a cash amonting to 16 crores. She kept an amount fixed for gifts towards pious acts. she spent about 20 crores for philanthropic purposes. She kept in a place the surplus-money from the Treasury and dedicated it with rituals to pious works. She fixed various amounts for various items of expenditure. Because she was not Luxurious, and did not have to spend much for military purposes, she could spend enough for real constructive works

according to her idea. She helped her own people as well as foreigners, Hindus and Mahomedans. She fed the poor daily, and at celebrations she fed the untouchables profusely. Throughout India at almost every place of pilgrimage she extended her munificient hands for the worship of deities and convenience of the pilgrims. For woshipping the Deccan deities she caused the Ganges water to be brought from a long distance at an enormous cost.

As mentioned before, no ruler dared to attack her. Once the Rana of Udaipur opposed her for a few weeks, but was then defeated. She kept foreign ambassadors in her court, and own ambassadors in foreign courts. Even the mighty rulers of her time were not equal to her in piety. The Mahomedan rulers also were her well-wishers. She erected many forts. The Bhil freebooters she suppressed with strong hands and advised them to take to agriculture and industry. She kept correspondence with remote kings and by comparison with others' subjeets, she

improved the status of hers. The state of Holkar attained its Zenith during her time. Her sufferings were also many as mentioned before. She kept her daughter's son with her for consolation. He died, and a few months latter her daughter also became a widow. Ahalya prostrated herself in the dust to dissuade her daughter from self-immolation. But she rose over the pyre. And when Ahalya was trying to jump into it, she had to be forcibly taken away. She began to bite her hands, and fasted for 3 days. She erected a monument at the place, rare throughout India for its craftsmanship.

RANI DURGABATI

Rani Durgabati flourished in the middle of the sixteenth century and stood as a towering personality and embodiment of Hindu chivalry amidst humiliation on all sides, vying even with the Emperor Akbar the Great. The ruins of the fort which she bravly defended are still pointed out near Jubbulpore. The Central provinces are still redolent of her fame, and the roaming bards of Bundelkhand sing songs of her heroic deeds.

Durgabati was the daughter of the last Chandella King, Kirti Singh (Salibahan) of Kalanjar. He was the king of Rohta and Mahoba, the latter being the chief town of district Hamirpur. King Dalpat Shah of Garh Mandaran (Gondwana) belonging to the Gour-Rajpur clan proposed to Marry Durgabati, and she also agreed. But her father settled her marriage with another. Hence Dalpat Shah invaded the territory of her father, took her

away, and married her according to the proper rites. But, after about four years, Durgabati became a widow with her son Birnarain. So, for the sake of her son and subjects, she began to rule as his guardian. She died in 1564 while in action.

Under her regime, her subjects were happy. She constructed temples and homes for orphans, the poor and helpless, and widows. She encouraged industry in her realm. Abul Fazl tells us that she not only governed her vast dominions with ability, and carried on wars with her enemies with success, but that she was herself a good shot, frequently went out a-hunting, and brought down wild animals with her own gun. She taught her son Birnarain horsemanship, sword-play and archery. With the help of her subjects, the courageous and patriotic Gondas, she strengthened her army, and constructed forts in dense forests around Garhmandaran, the capital being Singhagarh. According to one estimate, she could put 20,000 cavalry on the field, if necessary. In all these matters,

she, of course, got the help of the Kayastha Minister Adhar.

Bajbahadur of Rupamati fame, King of Malwa, was powerful and oppressive, being feared by the surrounding kings. But he, too, was several times defeated by Durgabati. His subjects conspired with Ibrahim Khan to dethrone Bajbahadur, and, when Durgabati joined Ibrahim's army, Bajbahadur clamed into submission, laid down his crown at her feet and begged her to desist.

The Mahomedan rulers of Central India fixed their wistful eyes all along on Garhmandaran and its prosperity. But, in spite of their importunities, Akbar did not cast his eyes hitherto towards the place. At last, Asaf Khan's counsel prevailed upon Akbar, and the former with 5,000 cavalry began to raid the frontiers of Garhmandaran. Durgabati put her indomitable energy, inspiring burning courage fervour and resolute determination to bear upon her devoted soldiers. She inspired them by roaming from village to village and all who could bear arms united for the common cause.

She could master 4,000 cavalry, and 2,000 elephants, and on the battle-field she rode on horseback, actively fighting and encouraging soldiers. Asaf Khan was routed, and fled.

After about a year and a half, Asaf Khan brought the best of the Mogul army, about 18,000 strong. This time also he was defeated. So, he began to sow seeds of treachery and dissension in the Hindu army, and he succeeded. The fight continued the whole day. The Rani rode on elephant-back with her fourteen-years old son fighting near her, and Adhar as the general. In the evening, the Rani asked her army to desist, and advised an attack on the enemy in the cover of darkness. She was not heard, and went away with half the army. The rest began to fight the whole night, and got tired at daybreak. The Rani came, but time, there was now no chance against and innumerable fresh odds. After some her son fell wouded from an elephant, she arranged for his removal to the nursing place where he died. She began to fight, and

marehed farther and farther from her bodyguard. At last she was struck in one eye with an arrow. Still she continned. She was again struck in the check. She now implored Adhar to cut off her throat. Adar remaining dumb-founded, she herself cut off her throat. According to some, she took the knife from the elephant-driver's hands and stabbed herself. Her dead body was removed. Asaf Khan collected an immense booty, and he revolted and did not want to pay this to Akbar. So Akbar put him down.

In her life, there was something of the nature of courtship before marriage; Durgabati chose her own husband against her father's wish. There was possibly late marriage in this case as among the Rajputs of old. Durgabati became a widow shortly after her marriage, and led a continent life up to her death. There was no purdah. Education there must have been of the prevailing sort. Her health was all right. The works she did can compete with those of the best statesmen and heroes of any

land. Such examples, as we have said before, constitute the rule instead of exceptions. Is Miss Mayo ready to aver her ignorance regarding the real glorious India and retract her statements, at least those regarding which proof is against her ?

RAMMONI.

Her real name was perhaps Ramtara alias Tara ; she was called 'Rami' throughout the poems of Chandidas, and 'Ramini' by others. We have adopted the more polite form of the name current in some accounts, though we shall have occasion to use the curt form 'Rami' often.

Rammoni's story is introduced to show the divine attitude love can attain, free of from the grossness of the flesh, at the hands intense devotes, and also the highest form of devotion according to the Baishnaba form of religion. Those who understand Compte's 'Positive Religion of Humanity' and those who look upon the conjugal relation as the closest that can be conceived to exist between two human beings can easily go a step further, as was done by Christian saints also, in seeing Divine manifestation in each other's object of love.

Rammoni's life has also a special interest attached to it because she it was who

made Chandidas the greatest of Baishnab lyric poets, and, if we may so venture to say, the lyric poets throughout the earth, and who made him the pious Baishnaba devotee as he afterwards became. Chaitanya Deb was greatly influenced by Chandidas's poems, and the subsequent Baishnaba poets owed not a little to him. In the midst of the grossness to which Tantrism then degenerated and into which Baishnabism afterwards grovelled, and agaist the pleasure-mongering of modern civilisation, we may be guided to some extent, if we choose, in finding out the truth by the ennobling influence of the example set forth by the lives of Chandidas aud Rammoni.

Chandidas's songs are still sung throughout the Baishnaba world. He attained the highest bliss by his union with Rammoni. He was a Brahmin, and Rammoni was a washerwoman, and, in spite of presecutions and troubles, they could not abjure each other's love, because it was not of the earth earthy. Both attained the sumum bonum

in each other's company. The advocates of the abrogation of untouchability may apply this example with profit to help their cause. Rammoni herself composed several poems regarding Radha-Krishna. We may now mention a few points regarding her life that can be gleaned out from Chandidas's poems, a labyrinth of traditions and miracles and a set of conflicting accounts.

Chandidas flourished at the end of the 14th century. This is the view of Dr. Dineschandra Sen of the Calcutta University. According to one account we find that he was born in 1417 A. D. and died in 1477. However, Chandidas was a priest at the temple of Bishalakshi at Nannoor, a village about 24 miles east of Suri in the district of Birbhum in Bengal. Now, Rami's paternal residence was at Tehai near Katwa. She was married at 7, and, when after two years every relation of hers died, she found herself alone in this world. She arrived at 14, and, as she was young and beautiful, she came to a relation's

house at Nannoor. When she was one day washing clothes by a pond, she met Chandidas on the opposite bank where the temple was situated. According to a better account, she was begging at Nannoor, and the Brahmins took pity on her and engaged her as a maidservant for the temple where she met Chandidas.

Chandidas was at first a Shakta. Whether as the effect of a dream or of an order from a female devotee by name 'Bashuli' of the village Shaltora in the district of Bankura, or for some other reason he became a Baishnaba and took the widowed Rami as his love to worship 'Radha-Krishna.' The Brahmins of the village outcasted him. His post as a priest was gone, and Rami's meals at the temple were stopped. They now began to live in a cottage. Chandidas when alone shut the door, and fasted for three days and nights, owing to the insult above mentioined. The villagers took him to be dead, and laid him over the funeral pyre at the burning-ground. Rami who in the meantime went to beg came

running to the place and began to lament. At this Chadidas rose, and they both began to dance. The people fled taking Chandidas to be an evil spirit. And on the next day their leader sent Chaudidas' brother, Nakul to the former to request him to cast off this lowcaste widowed woman, but he said, 'I don't want cast or even salvation by casting off Rami." Nakul then went to Rami and saw her in trance and her divine halo lighting the whole cottage. He bowed secretly and returned to Chandidas, who on hearing the fact at once ran like a mad man to Rami, and called her mother and fully prostrated himself before her. She held Chandidas's feet over her breast saying, "you have arrived as the personal embodiment of the God I was meditating upon. But will you cast me off?" He replied, "I shall rather wear the necklace of scandal than leave you." Then the village Brahmins in a body came to Chadidas. He replied, "Love even in my eating and sleeping, I cannot live without love." He at last agreed to regain caste at the importunate

request of Nakul. He did this simply to quell the Brahmin agitators for the moment, because love was his religion and humanity his caste, and he merged himself in the ocean of love for God, seeing His embodiment in his object of love. Rami also was of the same high type. How could he renounce Love at this time? He saw Rami inside him, and not merely outside, and in his mind's eye he saw her in air, water, earth, society—nay everywhere. The Brahmins after great objections acceded to Nakul's request for joining in the feast. Rami requested Nakul once to show Chandidas the embodiment of her life's object. Nakul melted at the sight, but could not agree for fear of society. Rami became senseless in her room. After gaining consciousness, she went to Chandidas's house. The Brahmins sat there in lines, and Chandidas was serving rice. At the request of the Brahmins to bring curries Rami volunteered and brought them to serve with her own hands. They got enraged, and without partaking of anything, went away.

Chandidas said to Nakul when the latter was repenting, "By casting off Rami I was deceiving myself, and encouraging falsehood. So God has served me aright. Let truth, light and real love shine. Social immoratity and ideas of sin and hell are imaginary. Here is virtue and salvation incarnate before me." So saying, he embraced Rami.

Their love did not smack of carnality. and the application of ordinary standards of morality will be amiss. He regarded her sometimes as his preceptor, and worshipped her feet. He called her 'Father and Mother' at times. She was her 'Muse of the Vedas', and 'Gayatri,' the mother of the Vedas, to be worshipped three times a day. She was the object of his prayer, meditation and knowledge. She was his goddess in fleshy form, and, by this life of divine bliss and union, they both gained their ultimate objects, viz., the realisation of the Divine Being. Subsequent Baishnaba poets sang of this divine love in their sweet lyrics.

This love is an ideal one, and is not meant for workaday people who are liable to distort its inner and true import. Love they regarded as one uniform thing emanating from God, and those towards the different members of society, e.g., children, parents, husband and wife, etc., as only different manifestations of one and the same thing. Dr. Freud's theories are only a partial and lower approach to this idea. Out of those relations, again, the conjugal tie is the closest. And the next step, according to the Baishnaba philosophy, was to extend this tie unto God. So Rammoni and Chandidas united in divine love, not to be separable on any account, free from any mire and filth, and they both saw in each other the presence of God, the object of their 'Sadhana.' Finally the prurient literature and tendency of modern times may be improved by the example of the life set forth in this small article.

PADMINI

Chitore in Mewar was the capital of the Sishodia tribe of Rajputs, and figures as the one city in Indian history which several times defied the Mahomedan powers. Lakshman Singh, a minor, was installed as the Rana in 1275 A. D., and Bhim Singh, his uncle, began to rule as the guardian. Bhim Singh was so popular that he continued to rule even when Lakshman Singh attained majority. Bhim Singh's chief wife was Padmini who was celebrated throughout India for her extraordinary beauty and accomplishments.

Alauddin Khiliji sat on the throne of Delhi in 1285 A. D. He was a powerful and oppresive monarch. Chitore, however defied him. Padmini's story also reached his ears, and, though he had many Begums in his seraglio, he craved for Padmini. So he sent a letter to Bhim Singh, asking for Padmini and holding out to him temptations of big kingdoms in return. This letter was

thrown in the urinal before the messenger. As a result, preparations for war were begun to be made on both sides. Alauddin at first tried his best to attack Chitore. But it lay well-guarded on a hill. So, he was defeated every time he made attempts on it. He now began to torment the villages. The Rajputs came down and defeated Alauddin. The Bhils, the aboriginal hilly tribes of Chitore, also began to loot his army. So he agreed to a treaty, called Padmini his sister, and asked Bhim Singh to show Padmini once to him before his return to Delhi. Bhim Singh's ministers asked him not to believe in Alauddin. But Bhim Singh was straight forward and trustful, and he did not want to shed blood for nothing. Padmini agreed to show her face through a mirror. Bhim Singh and Alauddin roamed in the city in a chariot, and the latter was pleased with the splendour thereof. Both now came near the palace, and Alauddin Saw Padmini's face through a mirror while she was standing with her back forwards him near a widow. According to one account

there was a series of mirrors set one against another, and the final reflection was seen by Alauddin. Bhim Singh then went to Alauddin's camp without bodyguard; but he was chained, imprisoned and taken to Delhi.

Padmini now took the help of her uncle Gour (Gora) Singh. She asked him to take her letter of consent to Alauddin, the conditions stated therein being that she should go in right royal dress with 700 female attendants in palanquins (dolis), that he would remove his guards from the way and that she would see Bhim Singh once. The secret arrangement was that the attendants referred to were all to be fully equipped soldiers, and that two horses were to be kept in harness for her and Bhim Singh's flight. Alauddin showed this letter to Bhim Singh in order to gladden himself at the sight of Bhim Singh's misery. So, as arranged, Padmini met Bhim Singh, and both fled. When Alauddin came to know of this event, he ordered his soldiers to

ravish the female attendants who were going back at the time. Whoever went were killed from inside the palanquins. After fresh orders, force was tried to be applied, but the miscreants were killed. In the meantime, fresh Rajput soldiers came, and a regular battle followed. Suffering from a great havoc, the Mahomedan soldiers fled.

After a few years, in 1303 A.D., Alauddin besieged Chitore with a very big force. Even boys and old men among the Rajputs became ready to fight for their motherland. The siege continued for six months. Lakshman and his nine sons (out of ten), Gora Singh, Bhim Singh, and Badal, aged twelve, who was Gora's son, all fought out bravely and died. At last provisions and water failed. The ladies including Padmini, about 1,000 in number, prepared a big fire in order to sacrifice themselves in the pyre as was the custom among the Hindus, the ceremony being known as 'Jahar'. They put on vermilions on their foreheads, wore golden ornaments and valuable clothes, put on garlands of flowers,

roamed around the pyre seven times singing and jumped one by one into the burning fire. The site is still considered as a place of pilgrimage by the Rajputs, and the people throw sprinkles of water into it from a distance. The remnant of the Rajputs now rushed out of the fort, and fell, bravely fighting. Ajoy Singh, the tenth son of Lakshman and the heir-apparent, fled alone into the mountains instead of succumbing. So Chitore was ruined, occupied and kept in charge of Malladeva. Afterwards, Hambira regained it by force.

The purdah and the attendant ills from which Upper India is suffering can be traced to Mahomedan domination, the culprits regarding femaleoppression in East Bengal, to take one example, belonging mostly to the Mahomedans. Even Padmini was not safe from the unchivalrous eyes of a monarch like Alauddin. The bravery, presence of mind, devotion to husband and self-sacrifice displayed by Padmini are unique in the annals of any country. They are not fossilised ideas of the past, but inspire the

living generations of Indian ladies, though circumstances are against their full practical application. The self-immolation of a thousand ladies in the burning pyre for the sake of their honour is too big an ideal to be grasped by the Westerner, and he may better check his pen or tongue from belittling a civilisation far advanced in social matters, simply because he happens to be politically and economically dominant in the course of world-cycles. 'Fools rush in where angles fear to tread',—the saying may at least be applicable when India's social and religious sides are perverted by the Westerner. In political matters, also, as seen from Chitore, Maharastra and other places and events of India, past and present the moral is plain to those who have eyes to see. But it has been wisely said, 'A subject-nation has no politics'. An ounce of fact is worth more than a pound of theory, and nothing succeds like success. So we should stop theorising now and allow Miss Mayo to prattle as she likes.

KHANA.

This celebrated astronomer flourished in the sixth century A. D. The Bengali sayings current in her name may be either translations or interpolations or may prove her original habitat to be in Bengal. She was according to tradition reared among the aboriginal tribes of Ceylon who were famous for Astronomy including Astrology. Whether she might have been kidnapped or originally belonged to Ceylon, nobody is in a position to say definitely. Soon, however, she became an expert astronomer. She afterwards made many new astronomical discoveries.

Baraha, one of the nine gems of the Court of Vikramaditya the Great of Ujjain, was an astronomer. As he mistook in under-calculating the age of his baby son at the time of his horoscope, he threw him in a pot on a river. This boy, who was afterwards called Mihir, was taken by the aborigines to Ceylon. He also became an astronomer there. Mihir and Khana were married.

They being eager to return, three works on astronomy were given to them. On the way, Mihir happened to calculate the colour of a would-be calf to be white, and, on its at first being black, threw the astronomical works in disgust into the sea. Khana at this time came to learn of this. She said that his calculation was all right and in fact the calf turned white as the effect of the action of the cow's tongue on the calf. Tradition says that two works were recovered, viz., those regarding the earth and the heaven, but the third regarding the underworld was given up for lost.

They came to Ujjain and gradually became acquainted with Baraha. Khana was the most expert astronomer of all of them, and, as she used to answer questions which her father-in-law could not, her fame became widespread. Once when Vikramaditya asked Baraha to count the number of stars in the sky, Khana solved the problem. At this Vikramaditya asked for her presence in the royal court so that she might be reckoned as his tenth gem. Baraha could not brook

this idea. and ordered Mihir to cut off her tongue. Khana previousely knew of her destiny, became ready and died after the operation. This barbarous act could have been committed only by the exceptional few, and in every country such aberrations of the human heart can be found. So the "drain-inspector" may rest in peace.

In this connection we should also mention the name of Lilabati, the celebrated mathematician and astronomer. She was the daughter of the astronomer Bhaskaracharjya whose place of residence has been described as Badar, perhaps in the U. P. At the time of her horoscope her father came to know that she would turn a widow. So he tried to ward off the event by selecting an auspicious moment for her marriage. He placed a receptacle full of water, and on it another with a hole underneath, so that when water would fill up the latter, the auspicious moment would come. Now when Lilabati was looking over the hole out of childish curiosity, a pearl from her forehead fell and stopped the hole. So

the inevitable happened, and, soon after her marriage at an inauspicious moment she became a widow. Her father now devoted all his energies in teaching her Mathematics and Astronomy. She also became an expert astronomer so much so that she could even count the leaves, branches and stems of a tree. In 1150 A. D. Bhaskaracharjya wrote his Mathematical work in Sanskrit, viz., (Siddhanta-Shiromoni,) dividing it into four parts, of which the first was entitled 'Lilabati' and couched in the form of questions by the father and answers by the daughter. The Westerner need not puck up his nose at the name of Astrology because occultism has not as yet been fully included in the list of polished sciences. Even in our decadent age verifications of the truths of Astrology are seen in many places.

CONCLUSSION.

India's records are full of the deeds of her heroic and memorable ladies, and the mere cataloguing of their names will take about ten pages, if not more, In this short work we cannot deal with the life-stories of all the famous Indian women ; so we have confined ourselves only to a few, arranging their lives in chronological order. But these are sufficient to thwart the critic, if he chooses, from classing Indian women as beneath humanity. Regarding our selection it may be said that the past cannot be disconnected from the present, and society consists of the best, mediocre and the lowest units. From the above examples one can also see that the practices of late marriage, courtship and free of selection were then prevalent. The cause of deterioration in certain respects ought to be sympathetically investigated. Modern times, however, are showing some improvements over the intervening degradation.

THE END.